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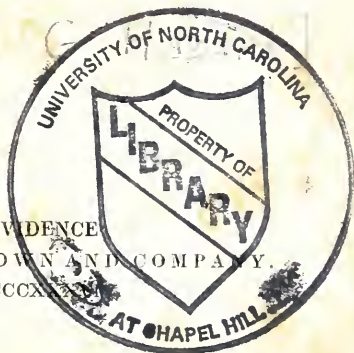
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ITS CONNEXION WITH THE PRESENT CONDITION  
AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF MAN.

BY A HETEROSCIAN.

[Rowland G.]

PROVIDENCE  
MARSHALL, BROWN AND COMPANY.  
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## P R E F A C E .

THE writer of the following pages is aware that some apology is due to the reader for the imperfect form in which the work is presented to him.

He claims no exemption from the solicitude which usually attends the first effort of authorship, and would cheerfully have bestowed any additional labor which might have made his essay more useful, more acceptable, and more worthy of public favor.

Causes beyond his control have, however, interrupted and diverted his thoughts, and under such circumstances as leave him little hope of being able soon again to direct them to this or similar pursuits.

Some of the objects of the work he believes may still be accomplished by its publication in its present form.

How far it will add to the science heretofore accumulated on the subject of which it treats, his means of information do not permit him to know, but a more general intercourse with men than with books, has led him to observe that there is too little diffused information on the subject, and that much theoretical error and practical evil result from the want of it.

As an illustration of this he might adduce many of the rancorous disputes which agitate society, in

some of which the question should be, not which party has arrived at truth, but simply which has adopted the better mode of expressing it—or in other words which has so expressed it, as to best harmonize with the system of truths before established, and most facilitate further acquisition—a matter of sufficient importance and difficulty to justify vigorous discussion and engage the highest talent.

He believes that the influence of language on thought and its connexion with those results which are retained and go to form our opinions and beliefs, are not sufficiently understood even by many well informed on other subjects.

If this essay shall throw any light on its relations with all the great objects of human interest and investigation, or if it shall have any effect in provoking thought and causing a more general attention to the subject—the utmost expectations of the writer will have been fulfilled, and he will be gratified with the reflection that a task which he has thus far performed with pleasure and benefit to himself, has not been without its utility to others.

## LANGUAGE.

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE, ETC.

THE importance of language is at once obvious to every individual, and yet, perhaps few are aware of the full extent of the advantages which we derive from it. Advantages co-extensive with knowledge, co-equal with the improvement of mankind. It is the means by which soul acts and reacts on soul. By it the heavenly spark of thought, emanating from the solitary mind, inspires each kindred breast, wakes the slumbering fire, and lights the torch of truth, which is reflected from a thousand other minds with fresh accessions, until its light pervades the whole atmosphere, dissipates the darkness of prejudice, infuses itself in popular impressions, and gives distinctness to the views and opinions of the public. It not only enables every individual to avail himself of the intellectual labors of all others, but it furnishes him with one mode of thinking for himself, and of condensing into general propositions the mental acquirements, which, if left in particulars, would soon become too numerous for memory to retain, or so burdensome as

greatly to retard his further progress. It is at least one of the distinguishing characteristics of man, and it appears not improbable, that to this endowment we owe a large portion of the accumulation of knowledge, power of reasoning, and greater susceptibility of improvement, which exalts our species above the brute creation. It has enabled man to form the social compact, and it is a form of words, which by protecting him from injury and guaranteeing to him the undisturbed enjoyment of the possessions, the comforts, and pleasures of life, obviates the necessity of a constant savage watchfulness, and permits him, with feelings of security, to abstract himself from the narrow concerns of organic existence, to range in the beautiful and illimitable fields of thought. It has thus enabled the contemplative mind to unite the opportunities of improvement and the stimulus to exertion, which are found in the charms of society, with the tranquillity of solitude and seclusion. It has given mankind the power of retaining all that the past has acquired, and of circulating it, combined with all that the present can bestow; thus adding discovery to discovery—improvement to improvement—refinement to refinement—continually vivifying existence with fresh cultivation—keeping alive the germ of infinity in the soul—elevating and ennobling its conceptions, and fostering and encouraging the tendency to illimitable expansion in all the powers of the mind.



But it is needless to expatiate on the importance of a subject, which is so obviously and so essentially connected with all that ennobles our race.

We proceed then to the consideration of it in the various forms which it assumes, among which we regard poetry as properly occupying the first place in point of time, as well as in interest. Various attempts have been made to define this portion of language. Of these, the notice of one of the most prominent will be sufficient, as the others, so far as we know them, are at least equally defective.

It is said to have been a favorite expression of Aristotle, that "poetry is an imitative art." The high idea which we entertain of the critical accuracy of this great philosopher, induces us to suppose that by this assertion, he may have intended to imply that the poetic art is, in this respect, similar to many others, rather than that it is thus contradistinguished from them. The magic of a great name has however wrought its charms, and imposed it upon us as a definition. A late writer imagines he has perfected it, and that poetry may properly be defined an imitative and creative art. So may many mere mechanical occupations. But this definition has most singularly missed the mark, and its absurdity is manifest when we reflect, that it is applied to the *productions* of the poet, to which it is just as applicable as it is to the hoe or the horse-shoe, which is produced by the mechanic.

The difficulty of determining the precise boundary between poetry and prose, and of ascertaining their distinguishing characteristics, probably arises from the fact, that as usually exhibited, most, or perhaps all of the attributes of each, are found blended with those of the other, varying only in degree. It is in this variation then, that we must seek the materials for a definition.

We use the term language as applicable to every method of imparting ideas, and by the term *signs*, when used in relation to language, we mean to embrace words, and every other representative of those ideas.

A language of words, in the mode of the varied sounds which we produce by the organs of speech, or in the form of symbols which we commit to paper, has been adopted, as the usual and best means of communicating our thoughts. If we carefully observe the operation of the mind in this process, we shall find that there is an incipient stage of our thoughts, in which they are unconnected with words. In this state they might, without deviating far from the usual application of the terms, be called ideas or images. The latter however is not without its objections, and the first, though it may be strictly applicable, is yet so closely associated with thoughts which have assumed the form of words, that we deem it necessary to apply another term, more clearly to designate our mental perceptions in this incipient state, and keep them distinct

from terms. We shall call them *ideals* or *primitive perceptions*, by which terms we mean to signify the impressions of things, and all the images, sensations, and emotions of the mind, which are independent of words, and which having a separate and prior existence, induce us to resort to language when we would impart them, or the knowledge of them, to others, or as one means of comparing them with each other. One person sees a landscape, and the impression it makes on his mind is an ideal. The emotions associated with it are also ideals, or primitive perceptions. He seeks corresponding terms and describes the scenery to another, whose mind also receives an ideal of it, and with it such associated emotions as the circumstances excite, and these are also ideals, for though in him the *effect* of language, they are still as distinguishable from the terms, or signs, as any other effect from its cause.

The communication of our thoughts, then, is effected by each one associating the same sounds or signs with the same ideals, so that the right use of them, will produce the same primitive perceptions in the mind of the hearer as exist in that of the speaker. In this first principle of language, we observe that ideals and their signs are chiefly concerned, and it is in the different degrees in which they are respectively made the objects of attention, that we may reasonably expect to find the elements of the changes and modifications of which it is susceptible.

The first and most obvious use of language is to express simple facts—to tell our wants and narrate the occurrences which observation has collected. This we shall call the *language of narration*. The use of it requires no effort of imagination, or of the reasoning powers, on the part of either the speaker or hearer, but simply an exercise of the memory in recalling the events to the former, and producing the proper associations between the sounds and their concomitants in both.—Departing from this simplicity on the one hand, by dismissing, as far as practicable, the ideals, and directing the attention exclusively to the terms, we arrive at a mode which we shall call the *language of abstraction*.

If, on the other hand, the terms are so managed that the attention is directed principally to the ideals they call up, or, when, instead of the immediate connexion between words and ideals, the associations between the ideals themselves are made use of, we arrive at a mode, the very reverse of the former, which may be denominated the language of ideality, or primitive perceptions, and which we apprehend, constitutes the most important characteristic of poetry. We may bring to our mental vision a number of these ideals, and, without any reference to terms, observe their relations to each other, and this, we would call a *process of ideality*, or *poetic mode of mind*, and is evidently contradistinguished from the abstract,

or prosaic mode, in which we examine those relations through the medium of substituted terms. It can exist in perfect purity only in thought. Any written or articulate language can be but an approximation to it, which however may be again purified in the mind of the recipient, by his dismissing the terms, and retaining the ideals. Poetry, depending on this prominence of the primitive perceptions, must present, or at least use for illustration, such as we perceive clearly, or feel strongly, and hence its intimate and essential connection with imagery, and with passion, which are only different forms of ideals. The artifice of the poet is generally exercised in inventing and combining, so as to present the *subjects* of his poem with such vivid colouring and striking arrangement, that they shall command the undivided attention of the reader.

Actual occurrences may occasionally present similar combinations, and objects of equal interest; there may be poetry in the circumstances; and in describing them, narration and ideality are blended in one common language. But even in this case, we use only the immediate connexion between words and ideals, while the poet avails himself of the associations between the ideals themselves, and, by this means, reaches those recesses of thought and feeling to which terms have not been extended, and secures that volatile essence of sentiment, which rising by its purity above the gross

atmosphere of terms, can only be approached by this delicate process. He uses language to induce an ideal, not in itself important, but valued for the associations it brings with it. With a cabalistic word, he summons the half recognized ghosts of departed feelings, and with the incantation of terms invokes a host of spirits from the world of fancy. But though we recollect not the word, and cannot repeat the terms in that order which alone gives them magic power, yet the spectral or fairy forms, the impressions, the emotions, or, in one word, the ideals they created, may be as distinctly retained, as the remembrance of any external object which we have seen without learning its name. The power which poetry thus possesses of extending itself beyond the limits of precise terms, and of reaching remote ideals through the medium of those which are within the immediate grasp of words, is its most important and peculiar attribute.

It is this which fits it for the communication of discoveries made in advance of the age. It is the receptacle of truths in their most evanescent forms—the depository from which abstraction is continually drawing the materials for the improvement of concrete science. When knowledge is advancing, this process of condensing keeps pace with it. Truths, first suggested in the strains of the poet, imperceptibly assume the garb of prose, and become matters of demonstration. This mode, however, is confined to the immediate action of intel-

lect upon real or imaginary existences, for when we have prepared a set of terms, or signs, and use them to the exclusion of ideals, the processes of ideality of course cease to avail us, and we are thus aided in our progress only by the language of abstraction. There are cases in which this language becomes so pure, that we pursue it without being conscious of any ideals. Mathematical analysis furnishes the best specimens of this mode, and without now attempting any explanation, we will merely state the fact, that in this science, the mathematician, considering only the terms, and guided wholly by the relations which he discovers among them, makes his way through trains of syllogisms, reaching from the most simple and obvious premises, to the most remote and abstruse conclusions, without any ideal arresting, or for a moment diverting his attention. No image, no emotion obtrudes itself upon his thoughts, and he seems to be dealing with nothing but words, or with signs in a still more condensed form. Not even the thought of any particular quantity is suffered to intrude itself among the signs from which he is laboring to deduce a formula, alike applicable to all quantities. His ideals, if such they may be called, are the first perceptions of new relations, or new combinations of terms, so immediately assuming the form of words, that he is not conscious that they had any other prior existence. All general propositions must be expressed in this language, and the progress of knowledge



being from particulars to generals, little advancement can be made without it, and we accordingly find it, in a greater or less degree of perfection, in every science.

Next to mathematics, some portions of metaphysics and ethics probably furnish the best specimens of this mode. When treating of abstract principles, of which it is at once difficult and useless to form any definite images, which neither present any visible form, nor excite emotion, the attention is more easily diverted from the ideals, and directed exclusively to the terms. But when, even in these subjects, we approach the consideration of mind as it presents itself to our observation, or of moral principles as applicable to the actual concerns of life, the inefficiency of terms becomes apparent, and the difficulty of progressing with our thoughts restricted within such narrow limits as they impose, becomes insurmountable. Still, so far as they go, terms greatly assist us; they condense a subject, for a single term representing certain abstract qualities or properties, may include all the individuals of a species, or divide them into greater or smaller divisions, as the number of abstract qualities expressed by the term is lessened or increased.\* In such propositions as that which is a necessary existence, must always have existed; space is a necessary existence—

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\*See Note on succeeding page.



therefore space must always have existed. The first calls up no ideal; it tells us of no event; its truth or falsity is to be determined only by the relations of the terms in which it is expressed, and is therefore purely in the language of abstraction. The last being a conclusion growing out of the consideration of the *terms* of the other two, is of the same character.

This is a tiny, and we fear but a faint illustration of the influence of this form of language in the process of thought, and of the power which it imparts. With this guide, the man of abstraction fearlessly traverses the wide ocean of speculations, in search of rich discoveries in distant climes, where hidden mines of knowledge seldom fail to reward his enterprise and toil.

With a view of contrasting this language with

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*Thus:				
Oil,	}	Liquids	}	Fluids.
Water.				
Spirits, &c.				
Oxygen,	}	Gases.	}	Fluids.
Hydrogen,				
Nitrogen, &c.				
Granite,	}	Stone.	}	Matter.
Quartz,				
Hornblende, &c.				
Iron,	}	Metals.	}	Solids.
Lead,				
Copper, &c.				
Barytes,	}	Earths.	}	Solids.
Magnesia,				
Alumina, &c.				

that of ideality, let us examine another illustration. If we say that mirror is *in* this room—this room is *in* this house—therefore that mirror is *in* this house—the repetition of the word *in* in each step, assures us of the correctness of the inference. But if we say that mirror is *in* this room—this room is *a part of* this house—therefore that mirror is *a part of* this house—the change in terms immediately warns us, that our conclusion is not a necessary consequence of our premises, and the effect is in both instances the same, if for mirror, room, and house, we substitute unknown terms which will call up no ideals in the mind. This shows us, that to connect the different parts of a discourse in the language of abstraction, we must retain the terms of the successive propositions which compose it; while in the language of ideality, the terms are immediately discarded, and the ideals they have suggested are alone impressed on the memory. The first fills the mind with a concatenation of terms, the other presents to its vision a collection of images, or inspires it with emotion. This shows us a distinction which every reader may bring to the test of his own consciousness, and if it is correct, he will invariably find, that whatever the merits of a poem may be, when any portion of it requires him to preserve the connexion, by a recurrence to the terms instead of the ideals, there is a cessation or revulsion of all poetic feeling. By the modes of narration or abstraction we are mere-

ly made to *know* the facts which are stated; ideality causes us to *perceive* and *feel* as if the occurrences were passing before us.

In metrical works of a philosophical or narrative character, the poetry, except where the circumstances are in their nature and combination poetic, will all be found in the imagery, with which the abstract truths or historical events are illustrated and adorned.

The modes of abstraction and ideality being thus directly opposed to each other, and separated by the intermediate language of narration, are easily distinguished from each other. They are often blended so as to produce an agreeable variety.—The orator in an especial manner may combine them with advantage, and particularly when his object is at once to convince and to persuade. We are often persuaded to approve a means, by having some desirable result depicted to us in vivid colours. But to be convinced, requires that we should not only perceive a good, but be assured that no equal or paramount evil will arise from the same cause. This requires that the whole ground should be examined, and for this purpose, generic terms, embracing large portions of it at once, are very convenient, and are more readily known to embrace the whole, as in recounting the countries of a grand division, we should more quickly perceive an omission, than if we attempted it in smaller districts. This, we suppose, illustrates the principal differ-

ence between persuasion and conviction, and shows the fitness of abstraction to the one, and of ideality to the other. The orator should bear in mind this distinction, and when he wishes to persuade, draw largely from the materials of ideality, and when his object is to demonstrate and place his positions beyond the reach of refutation, use them sparingly and with caution. The scintillations of his fancy should then be employed only to illumine the depths and recesses of his reasoning. If he make them the prominent objects of his discourse, we suspect him of attempting to deceive our understanding; our vanity is offended; we feel that he is only amusing or beguiling us with pictures, when he professes substantial argument.

Still ideality is the grand essential of eloquence. It warms the heart, and gives an impulse more like that which arises from the realities which it depicts, for it makes them present to our minds' view, and corresponding effects are produced upon us.

The degree of attention required in retaining the parts of an abstract argument, and observing the relations between them, and the labor necessary to follow it in its intricate paths, fatigues and perplexes the mind not well disciplined to the task. In the form of ideality, the circumstances which constituted the groundwork of the verbal argument, must be so arranged, that their connexion with the result may be perceived without any conscious effort.—When the orator has succeeded in bringing the

subject home to the perception of his hearers, the effect on them approaches to that of actually observing what he depicts, and produces in them similar emotions and impulses. He, therefore, who would long command the attention, and sway the feelings of an audience, must enliven his discourse with an infusion of ideality.

While abstraction illuminates with a single concentrated beam, ideality dazzles with a multiplying reflector, and if a ray diverge from its destined course, she interposes another ideal, which reflects it to its proper point.

It will be observed, that the view thus far taken of poetry, is independent of its usual accompaniments, metre and rhyme. We consider them, not as essential attributes, but as decorations, which it may, or may not assume.

The artificial arrangement of feet, in poetic composition, produces a pleasing alternation of effort and repose, to the organs both of speaking and hearing; and the lines all containing an equal number of these feet, and similarly arranged, furnishes a rule, which enables the reader to proceed by the force of habit or mere imitation, thus leaving the attention to be more exclusively exerted on the ideals. The emphatic words being manifest, makes the sense clear, and gives point, precision and force to expressions, which might otherwise require to be much lengthened to prevent ambiguity.

The attention is left still more at liberty, by each line embracing a distinct division of the sense; and this effect is again increased, when these divisions are marked by terminations similar in sound. The last of the rhyming words carrying the attention back to the first, presents more of the subject at once, and knits the whole more closely together. Another happy effect of this similarity of arrangement and terminations, arises from association. It is an interest, analogous to that which we feel in a stranger who happens to resemble a friend, and which is so often excited before we are conscious of the cause. One line enchants us, and another, though it breathes not its spirit and is destitute of its intrinsic charm, imparts a pleasure like that we enjoy in the first hasty glance of a portrait, where the hand of art has given such expression to the features of one we love, that in the first moment of rapture, we perceive not, we think not, that "soul is wanting there."

Another advantage of thus limiting the mode of expression to a particular form, is, that it checks the impetuosity of the poet, and by compelling him to dwell longer on the subject, makes his views of it more varied and complete. It also obliges him

resort to a multiplicity of terms and phrases, which will suggest many new relations and greatly extend the range of his thought. To these two causes, he is probably indebted for the perfection of many of his first ideas; for some of his most

beautiful analogies; and for those little delicacies of expression and sentiment, which give such exquisite finish to his creations. We will omit the consideration of some minor points, those already suggested being sufficient to show the more important advantages of metre and rhyme in poetic composition. It may however happen, that these advantages are sometimes counterbalanced by the restrictions they impose. It is possible there may be instances in which the artless grace, the native vivacity of freedom, may lend more touching charms, and imbue unadorned poetry with more thrilling beauty, than all these artificial decorations and refinements can bestow.

Without seeking for a cause to support the extreme of this conjecture, we will offer as a partial illustration, the first portion of Burke's apostrophe to the queen of France.

“It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles, and surely *never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision.*”

The first part of this sentence, merely informs us of the time and place at which he had seen the queen, and that she was then the dauphiness. It is therefore narrative. But the conclusion is in the language of ideality, and strikes us as a happy application of the poetic art. The mind in progressing through it, is so happily prepared by the

image, which having "*lighted on this orb,*" must of course, have come from other spheres, and *hardly touching it*, flits before his imagination, that the conclusion, which in ordinary language, would merely have embodied the preceding description in some delightful object of vision, now exerts a magic influence, and calls up the subject of some entrancing reverie or ecstatic dream—perchance an angel form, which in some bright moment of enchantment, has lent its celestial influence to the illusions of fancy. His imagination recalls the image fresh from heaven, too pure to touch our earth, or breathe an atmosphere so gross, but enveloped in a fleecy cloud of heavenly element, buoyant with purity, and deriving a pearly splendor from its unearthly transparency. The smile with which it vanished again beams upon him. He recollects the thrill of pleasure, the exaltation of feeling, so pure, so ennobling, so pervading, that he felt as if all mind, and mind all refinement and ecstasy.

The next sentence—"I saw her just above the horizon decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in, full of life and splendor and joy;" may naturally suggest to us the orb of day, decorating with his beams the loveliness of nature in the freshness of early morn, or its inferior only in splendor, shedding her more mild and benign influence over some tranquil and enchanting scene. And, with these scenes may be recalled those moments, when their purifying and exhilara-



ting influence imparted vivacity and life, and the animation around us, had its analogy in the gaiety and joy within. Such are the phantasms, which these few words may have summoned from the shades of oblivion, and with magician power imparted distinctness to the misty shrouding of departed feelings and forgotten scenes; and which in again vanishing, have concentrated in one ideal, and pictured the young queen before us as an angel form of spotless purity—glowing with life—radiant with joy—surrounded with splendor—imparting ecstasy to all, and elevating and ennobling all within the sphere of her influence.

One of the characteristic qualities of this mode of expression is the rapidity to which it excites thought; an obvious consequence of a multiplicity of ideals being immediately made the objects of our perceptions, without the usual circumlocution of examining their relations through the medium of terms. This rapidity is frequently still farther accelerated by one set of expressions giving rise to two trains of ideas. The one consisting of the ideals and their wide spread associations, each of which by the delicate mechanism of analogy, exhibits the subject in some new position, sheds the light of illustration upon it, or reproduces and adds another ideal to the less expansive train which bears it forward in its already illuminated path.

When we consider this effect of accelerated mental excitement, and unite to it, that which aris-

es from the power of calling up ideals or perceptions with all the vividness of reality, yet divested of the modifying circumstances of real life, we shall perceive that we have 'advanced far in the discovery of the secret springs of poetic inspiration—of the hidden sources of that mystic influence, which rolls upon us a tide of feelings, the most exquisite and exalting, or acute and overwhelming.

In the language of narration, our course is prescribed by the order of events.

In the language of abstraction, each step is controlled by the term of those which precede it. They guide our reasoning. But as objects may be seen, and emotions felt, in any conceivable order of succession, or without any order at all, so ideals, their immediate representatives, may in like manner be presented, and the poet discarding these guides, may freely follow the dictates of his fancy, till lost in the mazes which he has rapidly threaded from one bright object to another; overpowered by their dazzling influence; confused and distracted by their multitudinous and disordered assemblage, his excited feelings are wrought to a state of incoherent energy, and he enjoys or suffers a poetic frenzy.

The division or classification of language which we have suggested, has its basis in the elements of mind. Memory is first supplied by observation,

with facts, from which both reason and imagination draw their materials. Among these ideas, as expressed in the simple language of narration, the reasoning faculty perceives many which are similar in all respects, except that each relates to a distinct object. It divests them of this distinction, by substituting the same generic term in each and thus embraces them all in one general proposition—an abstract truth. It proceeds to form more in the same manner, and by a proper combination of these, to deduce others of a like character, or still more condensed.\*

Imagination on the other hand, avoiding those which appear common from their similarity to many others, seizes the more striking ideals, which isolated and far removed from the limits of common observation, unite the charms of novelty, with the illusions of distance. It is her province of these to form new and beautiful combinations; to present them to our view with the advantages which varied light and shade can impart, and with the pleasing

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\* Thus:

Oxygen resists less than stone	} Gases resist	} Fluids resist		
Hydrogen resists less than stone			less than stone	
Nitrogen resists less than stone &c.				
Water resists less than stone	} Liquids resist		}	
Oil resists less than stone		less than stone		
Spirit resists less than stone &c.				
less than stone	{ Fluids resist less than stone	{ Fluids resist less than solids		
" " "			wood	
" " "				earth
" " "				
	iron &c.			

illustrations which refined analogies and associations may bring to their aid. She thus introduces us to an intimacy with those distant shadows of sentiment and feeling, which have often flitted just within the verge of our perceptions, but were never so distinctly pictured to our understanding.

Of these three divisions it may be said to be the province of the first to suggest, of the second to demonstrate and condense, and of the last to perceive, to amplify, to illustrate, and adorn. To make obvious these various effects, we have the language of narration, which is the instrument of memory—the language of abstraction, which is the engine of the reasoning faculty; and the language of ideality, which is the machinery of the imagination.

We have thus far made no distinction between material objects and feeling, or in other words, between the external and internal objects of our consciousness. It is obvious that the former interest us only by their influence upon the latter. That in real life, certain combinations of the one, produce certain states of the other, some of which the language of narration has not power to describe. To depict these—to again recall them in their native simplicity, or refined and improved by new combinations, is the province of the poet. As a means of effecting this, he makes use of the circumstances or the objects which produce them, or of the associations which experience and observa-

tion have suggested. It is in thus availing himself of the principle of association, that he so often and so happily alludes to the effect, (not unfrequently the physiological effect,) of those feelings when excited. Of this we have a fine illustration in the expression—"All was still; still as the breathless interval betwixt the flash and thunder."

To elicit these emotions in a happy manner, requires a knowledge, not only of the niceties of language, but of the intricate and delicate relations of the feelings, united to a discriminating taste, which while it perplexes not by obscurity; neither wearies attention by prolixity, nor offends the vanity by being too minute. The poet must frequently give only the prominent ideals, and leave the imagination to supply the rest. The reader will thus have his faculties more excited; he will fill up the blanks in a manner most agreeable to himself, and reveling in what thus seems the creations of his own fancy, he will cheerfully award the meed of praise to that which has provoked him to thought, and imparted to him the elevation of conscious power. We may here remark that a little obscurity in expression, or ambiguity in terms, when so employed as to concentrate, rather than distract attention, may greatly assist this effect, and at the same time repel the attention from the terms to the ideals, to which they allow a greater latitude, but may still in some measure control.

Extending the application of terms, and at the

same time preventing ambiguity by a skilful arrangement and other aids, constitutes an important portion of the poet's art. It is this which enables him happily to express, what others have only perceived or felt. We may sometimes be led to fancy a connexion between the undefined feelings and thoughts which we have experienced, and vague expressions which we meet with. Writers may sometimes associate them in the same way, and this reflection may illustrate the remark of a popular poet, that "when he wrote very fine, he did not always expect to understand himself." In such cases, the ideals, though perceived in a state of high mental excitement, are probably indistinct, and their associations with the terms used to indicate them, rather accidental than conventional, or the connexion with them so vague, so delicate, or so remote, as not easily to be traced by the writer himself. In some instances this would be the utmost limit of his art; thought penetrating so far that he could find no adequate means of portraying it. In other cases it might be but the false glare of poetry—an abuse of that latitude which the poet must always be allowed in the use of language.

Though the activity to which the mind is excited by poetic description, obviates the necessity of being minute, and often makes even common precision tedious, yet when the subject is either sufficiently absorbing or important, the poet may present in quick succession, each separate feature of a

particular ideal until the whole is completely developed, and fixed in the mind with all the circumstances of reality, or he may dwell only on those delicate and shadowy characteristics, which recalling the more obvious, complete the picture and make it equally perfect and distinct. Such is that description of Byron's, where the image is that of lifeless beauty and its apposite analogy, fallen Greece.

“ He who hath bent him o’er the dead,  
 E’er the first day of death has fled,  
 The first dark day of nothingness,  
 The last of danger and distress,  
 (Before decay’s effacing fingers  
 Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,)  
 And mark’d the mild angelic air,  
 The rapture of repose that’s there,  
 The fix’d yet tender traits that streak  
 The languor of the placid cheek,  
 And—but for that sad shrouded eye,  
     That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,  
 And but for that chill, changeless brow,  
 Where cold obstruction’s apathy,  
 Appals the gazing mourner’s heart,  
 As if to him it could impart  
 The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;  
 Yes but for these, and these alone,  
 Some moments, ay, one treacherous hour,  
 He still might doubt the tyrant’s power;  
 So fair, so calm, so softly seal’d,  
 The first last look by death reveal’d!  
 Such is the aspect of this shore;  
 ’Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!  
 So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,  
 We start, for soul is wanting there.  
 Hers is the loveliness in death,  
 That parts not quite with parting breath;

But beauty with that fearful bloom,  
That hue that haunts it to the tomb,  
Expression's last receding ray,  
A gilded halo hovering round decay,—  
The farewell beam of feeling past away!  
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,  
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherished earth!"

It is not our intention to attempt an analysis of the various artifices by which the pleasure arising from poetry is increased, and the allusion we have just made, to one of the master spirits of the art, and the recollection of his poetic history, has opportunely reminded us of the connexion between poetry and love. A connexion so universally believed, and believed to be so universal, that it has been doubted whether any one ever truly felt the latter, without some disposition also to the former. All—no, not all—the heart which has been petrified by avarice or corrupted by vice, whose sentiment and vitality are destroyed, may resist, or rather, not feel its power. But the most abstract reasoner is not proof against it—the coldest mathematician, or the yet colder metaphysician, yields to its genial influence. Suddenly affected in a manner which he deems unaccountable; it is to him as though some law of nature had varied from its uniformity. Unaccustomed to such freaks of the imagination, he is unskilled in controlling them. Instead of being governed by his judgment, he seems impelled by some invisible agency, and the power of mystery is thus united to the spell of enchant-



ment. His previous discipline of mind and accustomed scrutiny of its action, serve only to heighten his surprise, and to increase the difficulty of a rational solution. The more he contemplates it, the stranger and more peculiar his case appears. Not doubting that he had before known all the qualities of the human mind, he is ready to ascribe this new influence to a supernatural cause, and if such a vision as we have before endeavored to sketch, should meet his wondering gaze, he may imagine—yes, imagine himself under the care of a guardian angel—a generous spirit which has suddenly imparted to him an elevation of soul, purity of sentiment, and delicacy of feeling never before vouchsafed to mortal. All the terms by which other men might in some degree express their emotions, are to him cold abstractions; he has already appropriated them—he has before located and limited their significations with a rigorous accuracy and precision which render them inapplicable to a new and expanded feeling. How then is he to express himself? The language of ideality is his only resource, and is naturally adopted, for his warm imaginings are primitive perceptions for which he knows no conventional signs. The solitude of his feelings finds relief in the objects around him, for all nature speaks the silent eloquence of love. Purified and exalted, those feelings are as inspirations from heaven, and he takes pleasure in tracing their resemblances to other manifestations of the source of all. His emo-

tions are too strong to be repressed; too ethereal to find utterance in the common forms of discourse; too highly prized to be lessened by such diffusion. Throughout the worlds of matter and of mind, he sees the beautiful, the delicate, the grand, the vague, and the infinite, with quickened powers of vision. He delights to dwell on the analogies they present, and in tracing out the metaphors they suggest. He is treading on enchanted ground. He feels the force of those invisible links which unite the spiritual with the material world. Those mysterious associations, by which the most ethereal modes of ideality are connected with external forms and appearances, are shadowed out before him. He compares the emotions of his heart to all that is glowing and ardent, and the object of his affections to all that is pure and lovely in nature. He is thus introduced to the region of poetry, and his unskilful efforts in the use of its appropriate language often makes him appear ridiculous. Added to this, he is acting under an excitement not imparted to those around him, and under circumstances, for which deductions from the past, furnish him with no rule of conduct. He has already questioned the omnipotence of reason, and doubts the integrity of the magnet which has been his guide on the ocean of life. Unaccustomed to steer by chance, he acts either with that embarrassed indecision or restless energy, which has given rise to the assertion, that the most sensible men are the greatest fools in love.

(The assertion would perhaps be more just if limited to men of the greatest reasoning powers.) His mind, however, crowded by a rapid flow of ideals, seeks relief in a corresponding flow of words, and when these in their turn become too impetuous, or make harsh discord with thoughts attuned to love, he instinctively opposes to their vehemence the artificial obstacles of metre and rhyme, or seeks by this harmony of arrangement, to make them consonant with feelings which fill his whole soul with music. It is then the language of ideality or poetry in its usual garb. Would it be wonderful if a man thus suddenly metamorphosed, should question his identity? or, that with the habit of reasoning still left him, he should argue that he who was once proof to the charms of poetry and the fascinations of music—who would turn from the loveliest of natures scenery to examine a triangle of a sophism, could not have been the same person as he who is now warbling rhymes, and feasting his imagination with objects before unnoticed or unknown?

Accustomed ev'ry thought to prove,  
And by fix'd rules each feeling try—  
He might ascribe it all to love,  
But cannot find a reason why.

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POETRY, which term we now use as synonymous with the language of ideality, has only a remote and vaguely defined connexion with words as generally used, which renders it difficult, if not impossible, for the poet to teach to others the knowledge of his art. Perhaps he himself does not often analyze the process to which he is indebted for his inspirations, but even when he is fully acquainted with it, the want of a direct and immediate connexion with the usual modes of communication, will present a serious obstacle to his imparting the secret of his power.

In the language of narration, the teacher may inform his pupil of the arbitrary but conventional connexion between the terms and the things signified: Or he may explain to him the necessary relations between the terms expressing the premises, the intermediate steps, and the conclusion of an abstract argument; and so instruct him that he may apply terms in a similar manner. But he who would seek an explanation of poetic imagery, or any other form of the language of ideality, must consult his own feelings, and his facility in understanding it, will depend on the care which he has bestowed on these germs and vines of thought, which in cultivated fertility and vigour put forth

numberless tendrils, uniting them all by these delicate, elastic, invisible twinings, in one inseparable, tangled, yet free and flowing exuberance. Who for instance, that had never known the mingled emotions of suspense and awe, or some analogous sensation, could understand what was meant by the "breathless interval betwixt the flash and thunder." The expression "breathless interval" would be to him perfectly unmeaning. And suppose we should attempt to enlighten him. We might tell him that the phenomenon alluded to, sometimes caused a momentary suspension of respiration. Our pupil would no doubt be astonished at the fact, would hold his breath, and thus get the new idea, that lightning sometimes produced an unpleasant feeling of oppression about the region of the lungs, which he would probably ascribe to the effect of electricity. We would still strive to rectify his mistake, and to explain to him the corresponding emotions of the mind; but here, after exhausting all the appropriate terms which common language can supply, we should find that there were some of those emotions for which it had no appellatives, and which no appellatives could signify to one in whose mind they had not been impressed by experience or analogy; or which at least they could not shadow forth with all their delicate characteristics and finer influences. Here of course, our illustrations would fail—but to the initiated, the expression "breathless interval" calls up all that may have been felt from the occurrence

of the reality. It accommodates itself to the actual feelings, and is equally applicable to the strong and vivid emotions of the one, or the weak and glimmering sensations of another. Such expressions call up in each the thoughts, the feelings, the unexpressed and unexpressible ideals they have respectively realized, or would realize, if the occasions, which the fancy of the poet has depicted, were in their reality presented to them.

If these considerations give us some idea of the language of ideality, they also suggest that it has its source in the deepest recesses of mind, and springs from the feelings which stir and quicken the soul, and the aspirations which lead it forward into the infinite—that the cultivation of them always elicits it, and that being thus the attribute of the inherent and imperishable properties of the soul, or the consequence of their improvement, it must continue with it in its every state of existence. It may be objected that this consideration is leading us beyond the proper limits of philosophical research. But some glimmering rays still light our path.

Does temptation assail us, the gratification which is to be the result of error is presented to our thoughts, and so absorbs our attention, that we turn not to observe the more remote and less dazzling consequences. If reason has time to trace them all in the language of abstraction, or if ideality delineates the *whole* picture, the illusion is dispelled.

Does virtue prompt us to a good and generous act, she calls to her aid the very feelings which are to reward it.

The application of these facts to our argument must be obvious to all who believe in communications from the spirits of another world, and especially to those who also believe, that some of those spirits have the will and the power to thwart the designs of Deity, and from the creation of the world, have maintained a not altogether unsuccessful strife with Omnipotence—for the mastery of man. To at least a portion of these, the facts we have mentioned, may appear clearly to lead us to the conclusion, that the language of ideality in its purest form, is the language of the higher orders of intelligence. To others it may still appear a visionary speculation, a baseless hypothesis, or vague conjecture. But far as it evidently is beyond the reach of rigid demonstration, permit us for a moment to examine its probability.

The hypothesis that death annuls all consciousness of our present state of existence, and all the mental qualities here possessed, involves that of annihilation. Or to suppose that it destroys the consciousness of its present state, while the qualities of mind are still retained, is supposing what is exactly equivalent to the extinction of one soul and the creation of a new one of the same material or essence. A moment's consideration will convince us of the correctness of this position, from which



we may fairly infer that the soul in its separate state retains the qualities and properties it here possesses, and the consciousness of having here enjoyed them. Analogy too, clearly indicates that the faculties which we have here been perfecting should not be lost. Nature is always more careful even of what is much less precious than intellect and moral feeling. Retaining then these qualities, and having this remembrance of the past, is it not exceedingly probable that some of the same sources of enjoyment which have here contributed to their happiness, must continue to constitute a portion of the felicity of the future? Now one of the most pure and unalloyed gratifications arises from the improvement of our intellectual and moral qualities by advancing in knowledge. We all know how much this is accelerated by communion with each other, and yet how much it is retarded by the ambiguity and inefficiency of words. So much is this the case that many sciences are now only advanced by first advancing language so as to improve the means of thought and enable a number of kindred minds to communicate their views and concentrate their power on the same point. But even when success has crowned their efforts by the discovery of some new truth, how slowly is it diffused—how long before it enlightens the public mind. The language of mathematics is undoubtedly the most explicit, and best adapted to its subject of any which we possess, and yet the controversy among the cotem-



poraries of Newton shows us that there was one of his discoveries\* in that science, the reasoning of which was pronounced fallacious by mathematicians of acknowledged learning and acuteness, and which very few of its no less learned supporters then clearly understood, but which, from the improvement in the modes of illustration, is now made familiar to school boys. But generations passed away before it admitted of being thus easily imparted and understood, and in sciences with a less perfect adaptation of language, the diffusion of truth in the higher departments is still slower.

If from what we before advanced, it appears probable that there will be some mode of communion hereafter, does it not now seem equally probable, that in that more perfect state, this obstacle to our improvement will be guarded against—that we shall there possess a means of social intercourse free from ambiguity—that the pleasure of advancement will be increased by its consequent acceleration—that when deprived of the material organs, words and signs will no longer be employed—in a word, that the language of ideality, which a partial improvement of our faculties has here elicited, will then be so perfected, that terms will be *entirely* dispensed with, and thought be there communicated without the intervention of any medium to distort its meaning, or sully its brightness—that ideas will

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\* Fluxions.

there flow directly from mind to mind, and the soul be continually exhilarated by breathing a pure congenial atmosphere, inhaling feeling, poetry, and knowledge.

This conjecture derives a further plausibility, from the consideration that our present language seems especially adapted to things material, that in the purely physical sciences we can communicate ideas with great accuracy and precision—that the difficulty of doing this increases in proportion as our feelings and the qualities of mind enter into the subject to which we endeavor to apply it, and when they become exclusively its objects, it almost entirely fails. Poetry has accomplished much more than the other forms in portraying the passions, sentiments, and all the more striking and complicated mental phenomena, but even that has shed but a feeble light over a small portion of this interesting field of research, or in bright but fitful gleams, shown the undefined vastness not yet explored.—Our present language, then, is wholly inadequate to a subject which of all others must most interest a world of spirits, as if it were intended only to carry us to the point from which we are thence to start—to give us a glimpse of the infinite regions which imagination has not yet traversed—the exhaustless sources of thought which mind still possesses, while the language of ideality has here accomplished just enough in the exhibition of the subjects of our internal consciousness, to assure us that it also pos-

sesses the elements of a power, which when matured, may become the fitting instrument to gather the treasures of that unexplored immensity. But may we not go farther?—may we not say that we have even here a foretaste, or at least a nearer approach to this angelic pleasure? Have we not witnessed the soul in all its purity and vigor, throwing off the trammels which words impose on its highest action, and, as if anticipating its conscious destiny, in a transport of impassioned thought and feeling, almost entirely discarding the usual mode of expressing them, when the eloquence of the eye anticipates the tongue, when every feature kindles with emotion, and the whole countenance is as a transparency lighted with its glowing conceptions? It is then that terms are most nearly dispensed with, and it is in this sympathetic mingling of thought and sentiment that we enjoy the purest poetry which warms the soul in its earthly tabernacle. Those who have known the raptures of such converse and have felt its exalting influence, will regard it as worthy a place in a higher sphere, and be willing to admit it to their most entrancing reveries of elysian bliss. Does not this view lend a delightful confirmation to our hypothesis? but the argument derives yet additional strength from the consideration that this faculty, this power of silent yet vivid expression, seems somewhat proportioned to moral excellence, or increases as the spiritual predominates over the material part of our natures—that in

most men it is at best but dimly visible—that in those of the finer grade of intellect, whose feelings have been cultivated, whose purity has never been sullied by corroding care and ignoble pursuits, nor their sensibility blunted by too rude collision with the world, it becomes more apparent; while in the sex of finer mould, who are elevated above these degrading influences—whose feelings are more pure—whose sentiments are more refined—and whose spirits are more ethereal, it manifests itself with a softened splendor, to which that of angels, may well be supposed, only another step in the scale of a magnificent progression. It is to the superiority which woman has in this expressive language; to her command of this direct avenue to the finer feelings, that we must attribute her influence in refining and softening the asperities of our nature. And it is owing to the possession of this element of moral elevation, that while the finest and strongest reasoning of philosophy has, in this respect, accomplished so little, that woman has accomplished so much. She possesses not the strength which has been exhibited by some masculine minds, nor perhaps even the brilliancy which has emanated from others; but the influence which they respectively exert on society appears in strange disproportion to the *apparent* causes. The one is as the sun which sheds his strong beams upon the waters and the waves proudly reflect his dazzling brilliancy; the other as the moon, whose milder light melts into the ocean;

glows through all its depths; heaves its mighty bosom, and elevates it above its common level.

The refined subtleties of an Aristotle, or the glowing sublimities of a Plato, though presented to us with all the fascinations of a high-toned morality, and clothed in the imposing grandeur of a lofty and commanding eloquence, are dim and powerless to that effusion of soul, that seraphic fervor, which with a glance unlocks the avenues to our tenderness, which chides our errors with a tear, or winning us to virtue with the omnipotence of a charm, irradiates its path with the beaming eye, and cheers it with the approving smile of loveliness. And hence too it is, that the degree in which this influence is felt, and its source appreciated, is justly considered as the test of civilization and refinement. Is there not in this mild, gentle, silent, persuasive, yet dissolving and resistless influence, a charm which bears witness to its celestial character? Do we not recognize in it a similarity to that of heaven, and if we have ascribed it to its proper cause, does not this similarity at once stamp our speculation, if not with the seal of a moral certainty, at least with the impress of a cheering probability?

It is apparent that such a language as we have endeavored to pourtray as that of a future state, would embrace that of narration, and thus to the imagination unite memory and its pre-requisites, observation and attention. But we are aware that

a difficulty may here occur to the metaphysician, and that others may be ready to inquire how some of these views can be reconciled with what we before asserted of the necessity of the language of abstraction in advancing knowledge. To the latter we would observe, that it is principally in the physical and intellectual sciences that this language is so indispensable, and we have already labored to show that it does not hold the first place as a means of moral culture. But to both we would urge, that the necessity of the language of abstraction arises from the weakness and imperfection of our present faculties. That if we could conceive of generals—of a whole species as we do of an individual of that species, and retain distinctly a long series and combination of them, it would be useless as a means of thinking. Our weakness only, obliges us to use symbols accurately defined, and which being condensed, are easily embraced by our limited powers.

To obviate this necessity, it may at first be supposed that a new faculty must be given us. But we believe that even this hypothesis may be dispensed with, and in lieu of it would suggest that if the faculty of attention were so disciplined and improved, that when we considered the image of any species, we could at pleasure and with ease direct that faculty only to the characteristics which belong to all the species, and divest the idea of those which distinguish it from the same species, it would be precisely what is now gained by the substitution of

terms for abstracted qualities. It would be free from those incidental associations, which produce error when they enter into the elements of a general result. And is it too much to suppose that when no longer engaged in the dissipating cares of this life, nor surrounded by the distracting influences of the material world, our power of attention should become so perfected, that we could then discover the relations among our perceptions without being obliged first to express them in abstract terms, and the language of abstraction and all the power which it imparts be thus merged in that of ideality.

They are then all united. Let us for a moment endeavor to form some idea of this combination, from the consideration of its distinct elements.

We have already remarked that observation, through the medium of memory, furnishes the materials for both the reasoning and the imaginative faculties,—and we may further remark, that without a sufficiency of the solid realities which it supplies, the first would expend itself on chimerical and illusive theories, and the latter on weak and vapid conceits. There evidently is, in the union of ideality and abstraction, or to speak of the faculties instead of their means or mode of action, in imagination and reasoning combined, a peculiar adaptation to the advancement of knowledge. The one supplies the deficiency of the other. Imagination, by her superior quickness and greater reach,



extends her flight far beyond the limits to which science has extended her empire. She penetrates and pervades the wilderness of the unknown, and frequently catches the first glimmering of truth, or shadows out the yet dubious relations between the most remote ideas, long before the approach of slower paced reason, and thus guides her on the way, and facilitates her progress to more certain discoveries. It was thus that the poet first pointed to the position of a twinkling star, whose ray sent forth at creation's birth, had not yet reached the eye of grovelling mortals, the probable existence of which, astronomy has since put forth the powers of abstraction to demonstrate.

The language of ideality is perfect in proportion to the facilities which it gives for portraying thoughts in their incipient state. By resorting to its various expedients, the poet exhibits casual and even indistinct associations as they exist in his own mind, which finding place in other minds, and brightening in their course, result in truths confirmed by common opinion or observed experience.—These associations, when traced out, are often found to depend on some real, though perhaps before unnoticed connexion, the discovery of which is thus added to the common stock of knowledge.

In the following instance we are made to associate crime and misery, by having them presented to



our mental vision, shrouded in the same intellectual brightness.

“His intellect so bright, that it could shed  
A lustre o’er the darkest deeds of crime;  
So dazzling bright that it at once could dim  
The sight of mortals, and from human gaze,  
*Enshroud* the misery itself produced.”

We are aware that it is now too late to treat the connexion of crime and misery as a truth in the poetic stage of knowledge. It has advanced nearer to the sphere of certainty, and we offer this instance, only as an illustration of one of the modes in which such truths first find utterance, and finally becomes embodied in the generally admitted maxims or scientific theorem of succeeding generations. It is thus that the imagination is continually extending the vague boundary of the circle of speculative science, while abstraction is as constantly following it up, by advancing the limits of probability and extending the less distant verge of demonstration. United, they enlarge the sphere of knowledge, fill it with the grandeur and magnificence of truth, and throw around it a garniture of all that is beautiful and sublime in the ideal. These faculties are seldom found united in a high degree of perfection in the same individual, but we hope we have already made it appear at least possible, that the obstacles to their union here, are obviated in the hereafter; that the unshackled spirit may there possess a quickened observation, furnishing an exhaustless supply of the new and wonderful, on which reason forms the sparkling bril-

liancy of demonstration, and an active and versatile imagination adorns with the effulgence of poetic imagery, culled from creation's vast expanse. And thus by their combined influence, every idea would be presented with the vividness of fancy, the coherence of reality, and the certainty of demonstration, and imparted with all its primitive fullness and splendor. That there, the same individual may unite concentrated attention, which like perfect vision observes all around it, with an imagination, whose telescopic glance reveals the most distant mysteries of nature's amplitudes, and a power of reasoning bringing all to the test of microscopical examination. What a combination! What a manifold fitness of purpose! What a power is thus presented! It increases while we contemplate it. It expands while with our feeble faculties we strive to grasp it, until it seems co-extensive with that boundless region which is to be the theatre of its action, and its limits elude the eye, in the shades of infinity.

The phenomena of sleep may elucidate the effect which we have ascribed to the abstraction of spirit from material influences. It may, in all that relates to our argument, be considered as a partial death, which abstracts us from the realities of sense, which shuts out the physical world, and the attention being thus freed from the distracting influence of surrounding objects, acquire a concentration of

energy, giving us that command of the processes of ideality, which imparts such unearthly vividness to our dreams. The connexion between reason and imagination is not yet sufficiently complete; we are not sufficiently habituated to dealing with ideals so completely detached from signs and reality; some of the faculties necessary to a perfect action are dormant; and incoherence and error are very frequently the consequence,\* but the great activity

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\*The apparent incoherence of dreams, is probably very much exaggerated, by our viewing them as abstract operations of the mind. Knowing that our senses are at the time inert, we very naturally class them with those mental exercises, which we are accustomed to pursue with the least reference to sensation, and suppose they should be connected by the same laws of association as govern this class of our waking thoughts. These failing to account for their singular combination, they appear mysterious, but the difficulty will in very many instances be removed, if we look upon them as imitations of the effect of sensation or ideal, which the increased vigor of the imagination, arising from causes already explained, enables it to produce with great celerity. When we class them with abstraction, we state them in terms, and in the relations of these terms, seek the associations by which one idea has been made to follow another. In this we are of course baffled, but objects, events, emotions, or their immediate representative, ideals, may accrue in any conceivable order of succession, and in our waking reveries, are sometimes recalled with scarcely less incongruity, than they assume in dreams. In dreaming, these are sometimes mingled with trains of abstraction, which being expressed in terms, produce a heterogeneous mass of reasoning and imagery, the attention often oscillating between the two, so that in the order in which they occur, they appear in strange confusion, when if separated into two distinct trains, the one might assume the form of abstraction, and the other be within the usual limits of ideality. It is possible that when we dream of using terms (of reading for instance) that we do not always do it, the ideas, the manner, the sensations, incident to reading, all taking the form of ideals. However this may be, it can-

of the mind, the facility with which it accomplishes many intellectual operations, and the unwonted vigor of its perceptions during this temporary suspension, may assist us to some faint idea of what a more perfect alienation from all that is material may effect.

There is a pleasant mode of investigation which the mind often resorts to, in the form of ideal conversations with absent friends. We conceive them present, state our own views and imagine what they would reply. From the knowledge which we have acquired of their intellectual habits, we adopt similar modes, and endeavor to get into the same channels of thought which they would pursue. We follow them to their conclusions, and modify our own accordingly. The advantages which result from

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not be doubted that this element preponderates in our dreams; and hence the effect of applying the rigid laws of narration or abstraction to this poetic mode of mind. Many of our waking reveries, and some written poetry would not bear the application of such a test. The following instance is selected as one of the most common and simple forms of what may be called incoherent dreams.

The narrator dreamed that he was settling a mercantile account. Having completed the additions he said the balance is two hundred dollars, to which I must add the interest—all the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, which makes the balance just two hundred and twelve dollars. He awoke wondering what the theorem had to do with the balance of the account. But when awake, the presence of a geometrical work open at this theorem, might have forced it on his attention, between the premises which he had stated, and the conclusion which he had in view. Had an ideal of any object usually connected with accounts thus presented itself, its intrusion might have passed unnoticed, or as no more than a common and natural occurrence.

this practice are like those which arise from the actual interchange of sentiments and opinions with the persons supposed to be present. We are led to view the subject in various aspects, and feel, to a sufficient extent, the excitement which usually arises from real conversations upon subjects and with individuals of our choice. In sleep—that state which most nearly approaches to that of death, and in which the spirit acts most independently of external circumstances, this power of adopting the thoughts of our friends is so greatly increased, that we hardly suspect it of being the same which we exert in our waking reveries. How often in our dreams are we surprised by the turns given to the current of our thoughts, by a remark, which we imagine comes from some one present. Sometimes when dreaming that we are engaged in argument, and when we suppose we have demonstrated our position, we find our confidence shaken by some new view, or some argument thus presented, so suddenly and so unexpected, that it seems impossible that it should have had its origin in our own minds. It seems strange that our own thought should come thus unexpectedly upon us. But we are sometimes no less surprised by a new view suddenly occurring to us when awake; and that which takes place in dreaming, is but a new view to which we have been led by imagining how another would look at it.

These views, and the terms in which they are

expressed in our dreams, are strikingly true to the modes of thought and expression usually adopted by the persons to whom we impute them, and while in many instances, if we had met with them when awake, we should without hesitation have ascribed them to the same individuals, we are struck with the fact, that they are widely different from our own accustomed modes.

Such dreams present another phenomenon still more remarkable and mysterious. In some instances we do not immediately understand the connexion of the argument, which we think we have heard from the lips of another, with the subject under discussion. The question arises, how could we have ourselves framed the argument without having perceived the connexion. Is it that the views which we thus perceive through the optics of another, flit before us as our own waking thoughts sometimes do, without our being able to arrest them—that we get a glimpse of an idea and of its application to the subject, then lose it, and are obliged to re-examine before we can again perceive it? We confess that this is not a sufficient explanation of all the facts of this kind, within our knowledge, and we apprehend that most persons will be able to call to mind some for which it does not furnish a satisfactory solution. But that the mind has a power by which it can in some degree avail itself of the aid of those which are absent—by which though it cannot perceive their thoughts,

it can determine what they probably would think if the subject were presented to them; and that this power is manifested in a much higher degree in that state of mind which approaches most nearly to that of its separate condition, appears to us, to indicate the existence of a latent faculty or sympathy, by which in a more perfect state, each mind may avail itself of the thoughts of others without the medium of terms.

Will it still be said that this is but an empty speculation, having no practical application. To us it seems to bear upon a subject of great importance, and one in which all must feel an interest. We regard it as a ray of light gilding the closing scenes of life, and dimly revealing a connexion with that future, where we delight to group all that ideality pictures as lovely or ennobling, and where we expect to realize these visions of pure felicity, which a partial cultivation of our spiritual nature, has here shown to be congenial to its highest developement. But how few even of such natures, contemplate these delightful anticipations unalloyed with painful apprehension.

The isolated paradise they gaze upon is beautiful, but appears to be surrounded by a troubled and unfathomable abyss. It is the distance at which they locate it, and the dark mystery which superstition has thrown around it, which fills them with gloomy forebodings. Whatever then has a tendency to destroy this illusion and exhibit, however ob-



scurely, the channels by which the present flows into the future, gives confidence to hope and disarms death of doubt and despair. Such we believe to be the effect of contemplating the nature, and observing the influence of the purer forms of ideality.

On this subject we apprehend that much error prevails. However highly wrought the popular notions of the future may be, they are generally of that vague and unsettled character, which produce little or no practical influence. They interest only those feelings which are acted upon by the power of mystery, and even the virtuous shrink from it as from a dreaded unknown. This is indeed to them an empty speculation, having no higher influence on their thoughts than baseless visions of hope or fear can produce. But it is such views as the one we have endeavored to exhibit, which gives this airy nothing a local habitation in our hearts, which turns the illusion into reality and bodies it forth in all its brightness, which extends our thoughts and our affections there and attaches to it all the interest of a future home, and identifies it with all the glowing anticipations and noble aspirations of the soul—which enables us to see the connexion between our present and future existence as clearly as we perceive that between youth and age, and to estimate the influence of the one upon the other, with as much certainty as the boy can anticipate the effect of youthful virtue and exertion on his fu-



ture manhood; and it is the extension of such views that can dissipate the gloom which hangs over the entrance to futurity, and so strip death of its mysterious terrors, that we shall view it only as an event in the life of the soul, which increases its vigor and introduces it to a higher field of action. It will appear as little more than a line in the path of our advancement, marking our entrance into another and a better territory, where the efflorescence of a milder clime bursts upon us; where the alluring paths of ideality never lead to error; where the frost of care and the blight of disappointment are unknown, but where in the bland influence of a perennial spring, the flowers of fancy are continually opening from the buds of feeling, and at the same time maturing to the fruit of knowledge, refreshing and invigorating the soul with new and varied manifestation of beauty and excellence.

It may be apprehended that the tendency of such views of future happiness, and such unalloyed confidence in its being the immediate effect of the separation of what in us is pure and spiritual from what is material, would be to render us dissatisfied with our present condition. But even in regard to things temporal, bright anticipations do not make us less happy, and if they sometimes induce a restless, feverish anxiety for their attainment, it probably arises from an impression that the season of their enjoyment is limited and will be shortened by delay; whereas in our contemplations of eternity, although

we may not be able to grasp its infinity, we are impressed with a consciousness that it is long enough for the fulfilment of our anticipations at whatever period they may commence. It may also be remarked, that the increase of happiness arising from that mental and moral cultivation which enables us to form these brighter and nobler views of our destiny is more than sufficient to make us satisfied—it gives zest to life. To a mind thus accustomed to observe its own progress in virtue and excellence, there can be nothing terrible in that which merely accelerates it. It is only those who are entirely absorbed in transitory pursuits, having no participation in the delights of a cultivated mind; no idea of bliss purely spiritual; no conception of a heaven not material, that the change wrought by death is associated with all that is gloomy and appalling.—Remove from them the material world, and nothing but a fearful blank, an abhorred vacuum remains. Engaged only with objects of sense, ideality has not revealed to them the more exalted sources of interest, and the idea of separation from all that has engrossed their thoughts, from all that has made mind manifest, must appear to them scarcely less dreadful than annihilation. If such be the condition of those who have neglected to improve, the case is yet worse with those who have perverted their highest powers, who have called them into action but only to degrade them—who have known and felt the powerful workings of spirit, but only

through its influence on lacerated feelings—its convulsive throes to extricate itself from the degrading shackles of vice, and its ineffectual efforts to rise and expand in its proper sphere. It is here that ideality, still vivifying and giving intensity to the feelings, portrays its darkest picture.

We have before incidentally remarked, and at the same time attempted to explain the fact, that poetry is the source of feelings the most exquisite and exalting, or acute and overwhelming. We ascribed this to the power of calling up ideals with all the vividness of reality, yet divested of the modifying circumstances of real life. We have since pointed out other causes of its increase of power, particularly those which we have supposed to arise from the separation of the soul and body by death. Tracing it in its progress, we see it while yet within reach of our finite faculties, becoming a source of pure, unspeakable enjoyment to the elevated and virtuous, and the converse will reveal to us that it is an equally efficient means of punishment to the degenerate spirit. It reaches our innermost feelings, and puts in action all the dormant elements of pleasure or pain. We know not that any description of spiritual punishment, has yet gone further than to picture what we here observe, in that figurative language in which ideality is so frequently embodied. We here see those who are degraded by avarice, incessantly turning the iron wheel: the man of low ambition, forever rolls the recoiling stone:

he who seeks gratification in the perversion of his moral feelings, is continually drawing from the wells of pleasure vessels which will hold no water: and that even here, the heart and spirits of the voluptuary are perpetually renewed only again to be preyed upon by the vultures, satiety and remorse.—These are indeed but pictures, faint pictures, of the mental inquietude, chagrin and desolation—of the bitterness of disappointment, and the reproaches of conscience, which in this life attend transgression, producing in the vicious, a mental degradation, a hideous blight, a loathsome leprosy of mind rotting in endless decay; which, however pride may conceal from the world, or however he may strive to blunt his sensibilities, and to stupify and engross himself with the distractions of sense, still rankles in his bosom, or in the anguish-riven countenance, gives convincing proof of the immutable and immediate connexion between vice and misery. He may observe the aggravation of suffering which solitude and seclusion produce in himself, or the effect on others, when the certain proximity of death has destroyed all interest in former pursuits—when shades of horror are darkening the sublunary scenes around him, and the mind no longer buoyed up by the levities and engrossments of the world, reverts to itself, and there meets the long smothered, the avenging secrets of the past, just bursting their chains, with resistless energy overpowering the soul, and exhibiting themselves

n the diabolical contortions and horrid writhings of their victim. These effects of a partial withdrawing from material things, furnish him with a data from which he may calculate, with something like arithmetical precision, the climax to which it must arrive when the mind is entirely deprived of its present resources: when it can no longer drown an upbraiding conscience in the tumult, nor divert attention in the bustling pursuits of life: when the host of vile recollections, the remorse and bitterness of the past, are mirrored back in multiform and magnified reflection in the maddening anticipations of the future, depicted with all the vividness of a dream, yet with all the coherence, and all the consequences of reality: when the fire which has long raged within, has burst its earthly bonds, and displays its volcanic energy in the uncontrollable ravings of torturing, phrensied feelings; while from the abyss of the past, lava torrents of reproach and shame overwhelm the soul in a guilty delirium; and visionary and dreadful phantasms, mock its nightmare efforts to escape these emanations and shadows of itself; and all acting upon the fermenting energies of a mind nervously awake to the exigencies of its condition, and wrought to its utmost intensity, not with the buoyant excitement of hope, but with the dreadful agony of despair. Will not the consideration of this rapid progression, hurry him to the result, and force upon him the conviction, that he has within himself—that a corrupt-

ed heart, a degraded intellect, and brutal passions, are the crude elements of a hell, more terrific than any which has been realized from all the physical torture which superstition has conceived, or fanaticism attempted to portray. The fact that he has already witnessed its commencement, and the conviction that its consummation depends only on the stability of the laws of nature, (or as we would rather say, on the continuance of the uniform modes of Deity) of which we already have the evidence, and can in some degree estimate, gives it an appalling certainty. We know that its fulfilment will be but the natural effect of causes which are attested by human consciousness, and hence we perceive that it needs not a special interference of Deity to accomplish, but that it would require a miracle, perhaps more than a miracle to prevent it.

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THE imagination being the most excursive faculty, and describing that which it rapidly glances over, by analogies to what was before known, and by refinements of the language which already exists, has a greater celerity than reason, which follows with assured and cautious steps, and has to adapt a language of terms to every new discovery. The former sweeps the distant verge of the dim horizon, and communicates the results of her desultory

search, in shadowy forms, which the latter condenses into terms, and brings to the test of a more critical examination. She then embodies, organises, and extends her dominion over the newly acquired territory, forming on its remotest confines, more distant stations, and with its treasures raising higher the monuments of her power, from which fancy may again take its survey, and extend its horizon over yet more remote regions.

In the natural order of events then ideality precedes reasoning, and if poetry has not always presented the first indications of remote truth, it is because of the superior discipline and perseverance of men of abstraction, or perhaps oftener, because her own votaries have abandoned their high office of telescopic observers, and ingloriously contented themselves with a more humble and limited occupation of their talents. Happy mortals! who with the most exalting and soul kindling endowments, with powers which might exert a happy and immortal influence on the destinies of man; are still content to tread the level and beaten track of unambitious life; who find ample amusement in gathering the flowers and picking up the pebbles they chance to meet with, and sufficient excitement in the dubious and ephemeral fame which may attend their success. They suffer themselves to be quietly enslaved by these sweet enticements, and enervated in gentle dalliance with such pretty toys. Their souls lose the power of lofty effort; they



shrink from the contest, and are no longer candidates for eternity.

Some of these, more skilled than others in the mechanism of verse, form these insignificant trifles into poetic kaliedascopes, where they appear with all the charms which varied arrangement, and multiplied and harmonious reflection can bestow on such common place materials. We turn them round, and are amused for the moment; but change itself soon ceases to be novelty, and even variety becomes monotonous. He who aspires to immortality, must add to these every day beauties of nature, more rare and costly materials, derived from less accessible sources. He must labor in the mines of thought, and give the extracted gems the soul-lit sparkling polish which genius can bestow; and from ocean depths of feeling, bring pearls of purity and loveliness. He must cultivate an intimacy with nature in all her forms. He must gambol with her in her frolics; he must meditate with her in her tranquil scenes; or rush with her into the tempest, and witness the strife of elements. With her he must seize the roaring ocean by its mane, and mingle with the lightning, and hold communion with the thunder of the storm; or with a nobler effort, and a higher aim, soar aloft on the aspiring wing of fancy, and with the unshrinking eye, and the daring hand of genius, cull the radiance of the welkin arch, and bring its star-lit splendors, fresh and sparkling to adorn his page.



With such splendid materials he must illuminate and adorn the path to those distant truths, which his far searching vision has first distinctly revealed to himself alone. These he must amplify with the powers of that language which is exclusively his own—a language which free from vulgar associations, elevates the reader into a higher, purer, nobler region of thought. His discoveries are primitive perceptions, and a skilful use of the language of ideality can alone enable him fully to impart them to others. With this he exhibits them with the impress of his own intellect and sensibility. He portrays them as they exist in his own mind, with the same vivid coloring and sparkling radiance, illustrated by striking analogies, and connected with associations so varied and diffusive, that to the utmost stretch of vision, it presents new and delightful combinations, and in its farthest outline, seems still expanding like the inappreciable and intangible emotions of music.

The inappreciable and intangible emotions of music. These words have produced an effect which we have already ascribed to the use of terms. They have led us on to a point, from which we perceive the adumbrations of another bright spot in this unexplored wilderness; in advance, yet immediately connected with that in which we have already expatiated. It is the connexion of poetry with music. If we have observed the fitness of the former to the subjects of feeling and of spirit, do we not perceive

something in the latter, still more evidently having relation to some higher purpose than that of our physical existence? Is there not in these indescribable emotions--something which we here in vain attempt to grasp, more comprehensive, more etherial even than poetry—a benign influence, which gleams on the soul, and as a ray of light in its rapid course, just rouses its energies, and sweeps endlessly on through infinity? With any power of attention which we here enjoy, and with the limited means which we here possess of imparting these emotions, the sounds by which they are usually communicated, require to be dwelt upon and varied. The mind at each successive variation pauses to examine the sensation; makes an effort to identify the indistinct associations which seem hovering around it, and requires to dwell on them for a moment, before it can be satisfied that they are too etherial to be fully appreciated by its blunt sensibilities, and too vast to be embraced by its limited comprehension. It is a series of excitements, an induced activity to which the soul is wrought, without any conscious effort of its own. But suppose music divested of its sounds (which absorb a portion of the attention) and the unmingled emotions to be immediately imparted to spirit when the concentration of attention will admit of their passing in rapid and intensely exhilarating succession, while the increase of its powers enables it to follow and pervade the circle in which each expands itself in feelings' boundlessness.

The associations of music with sounds is so general, that to some; even the hypothetical separation of them may appear preposterous. We however think it perfectly conceivable. We apprehend that the composers of music must have the emotions independent of the sounds, as the poet has the ideals independent of the terms; and we believe that Shakspeare's denunciation of him who has not music in his soul, would have been more justly applied to those who are destitute of these innate emotions, than to those who, from organic defect, or perhaps from being conversant with a superior harmony within themselves, are less influenced by mere sounds, however mellifluous and delightful to better ears, or less cultivated sensibilities.

In defence of the high station which we have assigned to musical emotion, we may remark, that it is in the highest exaltation of mental action that these emotions are most perceptible. The effects of refined music is very much enhanced, when the mind is under the influence of some absorbing sentiment, which concentrates its energies, while it withdraws it from narrow, selfish considerations, and inspires it with generous feeling. It is then that the fine tones within responsively swell the harmony which blends with them from without. We find this to be the case when it is kindled into enthusiasm by the high and hallowing emotions of virtuous love, when our conceptions of loveliness, purity, and bliss, so far outstrip our powers of expression,

as to belong rather to the empyrial evanescence of music, than to the most ethereal forms of poetry. When this sentiment reaches a still higher elevation—when infinite goodness becomes the object of devotion, we find music, in some of its forms, almost universally associated with it. It exhibits itself in the rude worship of the savage, and attunes the heart of the most cultivated and refined sensibility. We find it in the devout homage of the heathens; and it lends its mellowing influence to the forms of a more enlightened religion. It softens the stern rigidity of the anchorite, and instills itself into the pious meditations of the disciples of a milder creed. It is an elastic element of mind, which adapts itself to the various conditions of humanity. Among savages, it manifests itself in rude, barbarous sounds, which appear to have more connexion with physical than with mental exercises. From this low state it rises through the successive stages of cultivation to that divine harmony of the spirit which imparts such a delightful charm, such kindling rapture to the silent meditations of the enlightened mind; and which, while in the outward creation it finds for itself innumerable types and resemblances, admits of no generic sign, and no external substitute.

We may here observe an effect of language in all its material forms. Like the mechanical powers, it gives us efficiency; but like them, only at the ex-

pense of time. In the language of narration, it assists memory by giving two separate objects of attention, either of which will recall the event or subject of our thoughts. In the language of abstraction, years have sometimes been employed in settling the terms of a proposition. This induced a more critical examination, and a more thorough acquaintance with the subject. In examining the relations among terms, many others are discovered besides those for which we are particularly seeking. We have already mentioned the effect of metre and rhyme, in restraining the impetuosity of the poet, and giving fulness and variety to his views. In music, there appears to be a yet further addition to this principle, and an extension of it to the recipient, by dwelling on the sounds of this artificial arrangement. In all these forms it retards us. It is always an incumbrance, but like the lever, an incumbrance which our weakness renders essential.

We have now seen language in its simplest form of narration, elevating us above the brute creation, to social and intelligent beings. We have observed, that in the form of abstraction, it becomes an engine for the acquisition of general knowledge, and thus carries us through another stage of improvement; but one in which narrow views still predominate. We have remarked that it still keeps pace with our intellectual and moral advancement,

and when our enlarging views pass the boundary of common, direct expressions, it becomes elevated to poetry, which we have supposed to be perfected, when spirit is purified from all selfishness, and in a future state to receive an accession of power by embracing the preceding forms. And we have suggested, that this combination may, in a yet further stage of advancement, be etherialized and sublimated to the more exquisite perfection of music, which, though here but a vague and misty shadow, may yet be the first indication of what is there to be embodied in the most comprehensive, perhaps infinite emanations of truth and beauty. This progression is facilitated by the generous feelings which carry us beyond the little circle of common affairs, and particularly by those excitements which elevate us far above them; for it is only in the farther and higher departments of thought, that we are compelled to think only in the poetic form of ideals. Hence it is, that this faculty is so often first developed, when love,

“ That feeling from the Godhead caught,  
Has won from earth each sordid thought,”

and makes us conscious of a happiness too generous and exalted, too pure and etherial, too vast for words to express. The effect of this expansive sentiment upon the modes of thought and expression, is one of the most striking illustrations of the theory we have advanced, and as such deserves a further notice. In its most romantic, and also



its most ennobling form, it is the result of all the estimable qualities which the excited imagination of the lover can combine, embodied and harmonizing in some pleasing object, which has, in some generally unknown manner, excited the first emotion. When these perfections are different from any which we are conscious of possessing within ourselves, we have no means of measuring their extent, and the imagination may expand without limit to meet its wants, or its conceptions. The superiority of mind to matter, and the greater expansibility of its qualities, indicate it as the only terrestrial object capable of exciting this hallowed emotion, and the diversity, which is a necessary element in perfecting it, is found admirably designed in the modifications of the masculine and feminine characters. This is confirmed by common observation. If these views of the romantic passion are correct, it is evident that the imagination will almost immediately have filled the measure of this ideal excellence—that it will have reached, and even gone beyond the tangible object of its adoration; and hence, although it may still retain all that it has gained, that object must lose its power of impelling it forward in the flowery paths and bright creations to which it has introduced it. We trust that we shall not be suspected of intending any disparagement of the sex, from whose purer spirit first emanated the spark which kindled in the breast of man this ethereal flame.

It is much, that woman has made us acquainted with one of the infinite tendencies of the soul, to fill the never ending expansion of which, she must be more than angel. Must this influence then be arrested and the consequent improvement cease? Has this spirituality been awakened in the soul, only to shed a momentary gleam of romance over the realities of life? Analogy rejects the idea; it must serve some higher purpose. And observing the path of our progression, is it not obvious that this finite feeling may be merged in the love of that which is infinite; and in the attributes of God find an illimitable field for its expansion, where every new elevation but reveals more to admire, adore, and love; thus forever presenting a standard of superior excellence, and forever winning us towards perfection? There is, on this account, a manifest advantage in the Deity not being present to our senses in any definite, tangible form. His power, wisdom, goodness, and every perfection, are manifested to us, only in the beauty, grandeur, and designs of his creation; but these evidences are so obvious, so numerous and so varied, that every one may discern the qualities and combine them so as to form the precise character which will correspond to his idea of perfection, and which he can most admire, love, and adore. A beau ideal, in which increased clearness of perception will only discover new beauty, and on which he may forever expatiate, and yet not sum up all its excellencies



—in which his admiration will be perpetually excited by new and delightful discovery—which will continually adapt itself to the change and enlargement of his views of perfection, and appear more beautiful and lovely, the more he contemplates it. His most exalted conceptions of excellence may here always be realized, and the mode of mind is love etherialized, love sublimated to devotion, and resting not on the fleeting shadows of a feverish imagination, but on the infinite and immutable attributes of a Being, that can never be the subject of those changes and misfortunes, the thought of which will sometimes break upon the transports of the most impassioned lover. The thought of one beloved, and with whom fancy has associated every human excellence and angelic loveliness, has often elevated the mind above criminal or ignoble conduct; and if religion had done no more than furnish us with an ideal, in which we group every perfection, she would still have done much to purify the heart, ennoble the mind, and bless and protect our race. Whether the object, with which we associate this ideal excellence, be human or divine, the effect of contemplating it will be the same in kind, though varying in degree: the tendency in either case being to produce that elevation of soul, purity of sentiment, and refinement of feeling, which are the natural guardians of virtue. It is in this view, that we may realize the fulness of an apothegm of Madame De Stael, and perceive

how much more than the mere truism is conveyed in her expression, "to love God is still to love." We again repeat, that to a mind accustomed to observe and to contemplate its advancement in this delightful progression, there can be nothing terrible in that which merely accelerates it.

The observed connexion between refined intelligence, enthusiasm, love, poetry, music and devotion, bears a striking analogy to that so often noticed by natural philosophers, between heat, light, magnetism, galvanism, electricity, vitality, and the nervous fluid. An ingenious attempt,\* has not long since been made to elucidate the latter, by a division of matter into two classes; the one called common matter, having the property of concreting by an attractive power; the other or etherial matter, having the property of expanding by an inherent repelling tendency. All the phenomena alluded to, and indeed all other in the material world, are referred to combinations of these two, varying as the one or the other predominates in a greater or less degree. Pursuing the analogy, we may divide our moral nature into two elements—the one having an influence to contract, and keep as within the narrow limits of gross and grovelling occupations, and to which we may ascribe all the selfish feelings, which have no higher object than physical exist-

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\*Ultimate Principles, &c. by Lardner, Varuxum.

ence, or sensual pleasure, and if unaided, in its best estate, reaching no higher elevation than mechanical reasoning,—and refer the greater refinements of reason, and the generous and exalted emotions of enthusiasm, love, poetry, music, and devotion, to the predominance of a finer and purer essence, already exhibiting its infinite tendency, and destined, when freed from its connexion with the gross and sensual, to expand in the purer regions of an undefined immensity.

The calculations of avarice, and the sordid maxims of selfishness, are easily embraced in finite terms; and the language of abstraction, even when directed to more ennobling pursuits, has a constant tendency to narrow the path of our advancement, and lead us to subtle rather than improving results. The processes of ideality, on the other hand, are constantly widening and giving us more expanded views. We would therefore suggest that the latent connexion which exists between the purer feelings and sentiments, arises from their all flowing from this source, and the property, which they consequently have of gratifying our desire for the infinite. Thus, for instance, arises the association of music with devotion. The former consists of sounds so contrived that no one appears ever to reach an end, but to elude us rather than to cease, and these in forms so varied, as to create the impression that they flow from some exhaustless source; while the latter is an analogous system of ideas, expanding

without limit and modified without end, and so habitual is the association of sounds with ideas, that the recipient of the former often erroneously supposes he is possessing himself of the latter. Music may thus satisfy the infinite tendencies of our nature without affording it any substantial nourishment, and thus instead of imparting energy to those exalted feelings, create a morbid sensibility, producing disease, debility and decay.

If however the state of feeling which is produced by symphony, is similar to that which best appreciates moral excellence, it may be useful in religious exercises. It may assist in unfolding the moral harmonies. Or if the state of mind which observes the delicate relations of sounds, is analogous to that which perceives the delicate relations of ideas, it may be useful in education; but in both cases, care must be taken that it be made a means, and not an end. There are other sensible phenomena, which are perhaps, even more generally, associated with devotional feelings than music. The vast expanse and endless roar of ocean—the never dying murmur of the forest—mountains piled on mountains with no visible limit—the scenery of a nocturnal sky with its countless host of stars filling immensity, all awaken emotions which we feel to be closely allied to those which arise from the contemplation of the goodness and attributes of Deity. They all exalt to solemn

thought and heavenly musings. There is infinity in all.

We have seen that language is one great means, by which the etherial principle is first elicited, and then, by embodying the results of the processes of ideality, sustains it through successive stages of improvement, until it expands itself in devotion, where it may forever continue its progress without arriving at any limit.

Observation is the first faculty brought into action, and is for a time a sufficient source of mental excitement. The child is pleased with every novelty; we may see him sound his rattle, pause, and shake it again, to assure himself that it is the effect of his own volitions, and is thus continually exhilarated by the acquisition of knowledge, and the discovery and exertion of his own powers. His store of facts accumulates, the circle around him is culled, and hence a necessity for classification and invention (the two earliest stages of reasoning and imagining) is at once produced. These enable him to reduce his particulars, and to form new combinations of them. His mind expands until these appear too limited, and reason begins to form universal propositions which are among the earliest indications of its infinite tendency. These however relating only to things in themselves finite, fail to meet the wants of his opening soul. The infinite begins to claim his attention. He fixes upon

the most expansive of terrestrial objects, upon mind, but in a form so differing from his own, that he may conceive of it as imbued with qualities far surpassing any which he is conscious of possessing, and yet not feel himself comparatively degraded in his division of the species. This, as we have before explained, forms the poetic stage of his advancement. The finer feelings of his nature are now developed and expand themselves with a rapidity proportioned to the vast range here opened to their exercise, until even this fails to meet their wants. The universal mind alone remains; and here all the infinite tendencies of the soul now expand themselves; here refined intelligence, enthusiasm, love, poetry, and devotion, are united in a delightful harmony—blended in one heaven of feeling. The religious sentiment is thus fully developed by this union of all the pure and infinite tendencies of the soul, which traversing the finite, find no other sphere sufficiently comprehensive for their full developement, and nothing which harmonizes with their nature, but the manifestations and the attributes of the Godhead. In this combination, the ethereal principle largely predominates, and the expansive tendency becomes so strong, that neither human force, nor human ingenuity, has yet been able to control it. It has been loaded with the chains of tyranny. It has been retarded and shackled by creeds. It has been diverted from its proper objects by cunningly devised forms, and

gorgeous and imposing ceremonies. It has been wickedly directed to inexplicable mysteries, and wasted in the vain endeavor to elicit truth from terms which contained no meaning. But in despite of all these obstacles, it has advanced. It has set at defiance the power of princes, and broken the fetters they imposed. It has put at nought the subtlety of priests, and with the energy of enthusiasm penetrated beyond the forms and mysteries by which they have sought to conceal truth, and proclaimed its discoveries from the flames which surrounded it with glory, and shed lustre on its revelations. The only mode of preventing the development of this expansive principle, is by destroying some of its elements, or by taking away some of the steps which are essential to its progress. The experiment of shackling the mind with prohibitions, preventing the acquisition of knowledge, and restraining the reasoning faculties, has in part succeeded. But the step thus removed, is too short to leave an impassible barrier. The mind gets over the abhorred vacuum, and its weakened energies expand beyond it. It is by removing the next, and greater element, of our advancement, by destroying the influence of woman on society, and with it the generous emotions, the exalting influence of love, that the progress of mankind has been most effectually checked. It is where the female character is so degraded, that its ethereal influence is no longer felt, that this sign of divinity



has failed to exhibit itself—where from infancy man has been taught to look upon woman as a soulless toy, and woman to act as if unconscious of a higher destiny. The same effect has been elsewhere produced by her exclusion from society, and resorting to physical deformity of a kind producing sloth of body, dependence, and a consequent want of mental energy. Restore the soul of woman, and the Mahometans would soon have a better, and a brighter revelation. Suffer the feet of Chinese women to grow, and the men could not long retain their grovelling, slavish dispositions, nor the government, its narrow and exclusive policy.

It is worthy of remark, that a religion adapted to the wants of the etherial nature, must, like it, possess a susceptibility to never ending expansion. It must continually exhibit a higher and better state of existence than that to which we have arrived; and consequently the professors of such a religion will always be manifestly short of its teachings, while the professors of a rigid finite system of ethics may fulfil every tittle of their law. The Christian dispensation certainly appears to possess this wonderful adaptation. Its broad principles include the whole duty of man, and apply in every situation and in every stage of his progression. Like the source from whence they emanate, they always fill our views of perfection. It were to be wished, that the remarks which we have just made,



would account for all the acknowledged defalcations of those who profess to be followers of its great founder. How delightful would it be to draw at once an illustration and a confirmation from such a source. How encouraging to believe, that we had improved and were still improving, though the horizon of perfection recedes as we advance. We fear, however, that we must look to other causes, for at least a portion of the disparity between the profession and practice of christians.

But the application of this subject, and of some of the principles which this investigation of it has elicited, is so universal, that if we were to pursue it, we should leave no portion of knowledge, and no department of mind unexplored. Leaving then this vast field of speculation, we will return to the consideration of some points, more immediately connected with the two principal forms of language.

The language of ideality, admits of an almost universal adaptation to every grade of intellect. It calls up emotions such as the realities produce. It fits itself to the comprehension, and fills the capacious as well as the contracted mind. If the difficulties, which our imperfect modes of communicating thought, here present, were removed, so that every mind might at once be easily made the recipient and dispenser of ideals, the disadvantages of inferior intellect, considered in its relations to

society, would be in a great measure obviated. The less would then impart to the greater a measure which itself did not possess, and thus all be fitted for agreeable communion with each other. Besides, as the gratification of imparting or receiving knowledge, is in well regulated minds, just equal, they may be reciprocally the means of happiness to each other. Happiness will then depend on purity, sensibility, and a consciousness of advancement. In fact all depends on the first. It is the vital element of the other two, without which the one would be dormant, and the other blunted or pained. So far as mere intellect is concerned, the greater weakness or ignorance, will be compensated, by greater capacity for improvement. The wise and the weak may both feel all the delight they are capable of feeling. Both may advance with a rapidity proportioned to their views of the sphere of excellence. Though the former may have arrived at what may be termed a greater and higher degree of enjoyment, yet it will also require, all the larger and more elevated resources which he may be able to command, and where the measure of happiness is full in all, it will be difficult to say who enjoys most. Nor is it improbable, that we often err in our estimate of the effect of intellectual power. So far as a vigorous exercise of it advances us in the scale of moral excellence, it undoubtedly adds to our happiness; while on the other hand, its perversion, may sink us still lower in wretchedness. Moral purity is then the grand element of

happiness: moral degradation the great source of misery. The proper object of all, is the improvement of their intellectual and moral nature; and a consciousness of success in this great end of existence, is a source of happiness which is accessible to all, and in which all may render mutual aid to each other. The inferior mind must receive more than it imparts, but in thus receiving, it still conduces to the happiness of the more gifted, who are excited to exertion, not only by the consciousness of individual improvement, but by the pleasure which it gives them to improve others.

To omniscience, the pleasure of acquiring knowledge must be denied, and its enjoyments must arise only from a sense of perfection, and imparting to finite minds. But even this spiritual perfection, if it partook not of the diffusive nature of mind, if it were wholly locked up in itself, and could impart nothing to other minds, would be of a character little higher than a mere physical perfection. It is then principally through the medium of benevolence, that much knowledge produces happiness. Unconnected with this attribute, even omniscience, by depriving us of the pleasure of acquiring and improving, would be a curse. Hence the desolation of those spirits, in whom the consciousness of superior powers and attainments is united to misanthropic feelings. To this misfortune, the votary of ideality is peculiarly obnoxious. The man of

abstraction goes little farther than he can find words to sustain his thoughts, but the idealist knows no such bounds to his ardor; no limits are imposed on his fancy. His imagination revels in the infinite, and great as his powers of expression may be, he cannot always clothe his conceptions in that palpable form which will make them apparent to the multitude. He may have dreamed of improving the world. His fancy may have been warmed, his heart may have glowed with the purest enthusiasm for the advancement of his race. His whole soul may have felt the delightful influence of an expansive benevolence; and yet he may not have possessed that self-forgetting benevolence which would lead him, without any compromise of his own individuality and greatness, to accommodate his powers to the wants of society, and employ a portion of his talents, in making his discoveries more accessible to common minds. He may be exalted, and yet not be wholly free from that vanity which induces him to expect applause as the reward of his genius. He expected sympathy, and the world views his enthusiasm with cold distrust, and refuses to bestow the praise which fed his hopes. Confident in himself, he imputes his failure to the stupidity of others. Disappointment produces disgust, and the bosom which once swelled with the most generous and glowing emotions, now inflated with the proud feelings of misanthropy, or chilled with contempt, exhibits only occasional manifestations of its native excellence.

We feel the want of the support of other minds, in proportion as our views extend beyond the pale of certainty. In matters which admit of rigid demonstration, we care little who differs from us; but in matters of opinion, we are pleased with the confirmation of other minds, and in subjects of mere speculation, are delighted to find a kindred spirit, who has traversed the same ground and arrived at similar results, or is at least able to enter into our views and understand our imperfect descriptions of it. Hence of all others the poet enjoys most from the sympathy of congenial minds, and suffers most from the want of it. Hence, too, an intemperate zeal to make converts to a particular faith, often arises from an innate doubt or latent conviction, that the particular doctrine in question cannot be demonstrated, and requires to be supported by extrinsic testimony.

Even as a means of advancing knowledge, we apprehend the comparative power of reasoning, is often overrated, or too exclusively relied upon.—We give it credit for original discovery, when it has only attested the truth of what ideality has suggested. In some sciences it undoubtedly is all availing; but in the perception of moral truth, it often falls short of that intuitive principle, that sensibility, which is most frequently found conspicuous in those destitute of great reasoning powers. A lofty power of generalization may bear forward the intellectual philosopher even in the field of mor-

als; but how often will his fine spun theories be found inapplicable to the endless variety of actual occurrences. His greater strength may enable him to penetrate gloomy forests, traverse mountains, ford rivers, and make his way against every obstruction, even beyond the usual limits of research, and he may on his return, exhibit some remotely acquired truth, yet it is often as ill shapen, and as little adapted to the occasions of life, as the fragments which the traveller brings from some alpine height, as mementos of his useless toil. Others less hardy, and seemingly less adventurous, are endowed with a more refined spirituality, which enables them to perceive the delicate relations among ideals. Their feelings assume a softer hue, on which the finest shades of truth are more nicely delineated, and possessing, in these feelings, the most delicate tests, they are susceptible to the slight and beautiful indications of truth every where to be met with, and from which are deduced the most important consequences. If the former, with powers which may fitly be compared to those of the telescope and lever, has measured the amazing distances, and weighed the immense masses of systems of worlds, and overpowered us with astonishment at their stupendous results, it must be remembered that humbler instruments have elicited equal cause of wonder. That the microscope has exhibited to us a world in every atom, and introduced us to that intimacy with creation, which has

ever led to the most expanded views of nature and of nature's God, and that the tortion of a single fibre of a spider's web, has revealed that one of the laws by which he rules his thunder and shakes the universe, is precisely the same as that by which he has chosen to sustain it. If the first is a type of the masculine powers of generalization and abstraction, the other, like the softer sex, is the poetry and the music of our nature. Theirs is that refined sensibility, that ideality of character, that spontaneity of thought and feeling, which enables them at once to pronounce what accords and what discords with moral truth and moral beauty. It cannot, in the absence of the other powers, enable them always to appreciate universal propositions, nor can it protect them from the commission of great errors when they attempt to express themselves in general terms, but it seldom allows them to go far wrong in a particular case. If they are asked for a reason, they can generally answer only from their feelings of conviction, the sources of which are to them as inappreciable and as intangible as the inspirations of poetry or the emotions of music. I know, or I feel, is with them an argument, against which it is in vain for philosophy to direct its reasonings, or for satire to point its ridicule.— They pretend not to judge of the one, and rectitude of intention elevates them above the other.— This confidence in their own perceptions, is to them a conservative principle, which shields them from



many errors, which they would inevitably commit if they endeavored to apply the results, even of those wiser than themselves, without understanding either their speculative subtlety or practical application—*which they neither know nor feel.*

This power of perceiving truth in the form of ideals, is the basis of the intuitive principle, and though like all the finer endowments, possessed in a high degree of perfection only by the pure and sensitive, is yet capable of extension, in some degree, to every order of intelligence. In finite minds it is of course limited. In perverted minds it will lead to mistakes. Yet, considering the rapidity of its action, it is much less surprising that it should sometimes be wrong, than that it should so often be right. Even experience sometimes misleads us, and a general rule, tested by the observation of years, is afterwards found to have its exceptions. As the opportunities for observation are lessened, the chances of mistake are greatly increased, and hence of all sources of error, a too rapid generalization is perhaps the most prolific. What then would be the result, if men who have not cultivated this faculty, who are immersed in business, and whose examination must necessarily be hasty, should rely on this means of judging, where an error in the signification or limit of a term, would vitiate a conclusion, on which their correctness in a thousand instances might depend. The consequences would be incalculable, and



hence the importance of this intuitive principle, which to us, appears to be, but a process of ideality; a mode of reasoning, or of examining the relations of things and ideas, without the intervention of terms.

The mind glances through its primitive perceptions, surveys at once motives, actions, and consequences, and forms its conclusions, in times inconceivably less, than it would require to substitute the terms, test the precision of their limits, examine their relations, and arrange them into syllogisms.

From the quickness of the operation, and the absence of terms, it can give no account of its processes. How admirably does this facility in examining particular cases compensate for the want of generalization. It is evidently a mode of mind nearly allied to that by which we have supposed spirits to perceive truth, but often desecrated by its application to inferior objects. It however sheds light on some portions of our speculation, and strengthens some points of our argument, and particularly as this principle is developed with a clearness and extent proportioned to spiritual and moral excellence.

When this power of perceiving is sufficiently clear and accurate, it enables its possessor to lay aside general rules, and to judge, or act in each particular case, from his immediate perceptions and impulses, giving to his mind a reach of thought,

and spontaneity of action, which we generally denominate *genius*. With a *poetic sense* he perceives the relations of ideas, and those little delicacies of propriety and association, which words can but feebly portray. He is thus enabled to act with a discerning judgment and taste in matters in which language affords him no aid, either in the way of general rules, or as a means of investigation. Hence it is that genius acts independently of general rules. It occupies a sphere too far advanced for their application, and in which the processes of ideality are alone availing.

The man of abstraction often acquires a power nearly resembling this, and no doubt frequently confounded with it. In some cases his terms are already prepared, and habit enables him to substitute them, and to perceive their relations, with such facility, that the processes make no impression on his memory, and the result appears to be intuition.

IN the processes of ideality, the mind deals with the actual existences of the material or intellectual world, which present themselves with all their natural and wide spread associations. In verbal reasoning it deals with words, and the limited, arbitrary associations, which form their definitions.—The use of terms in the one case, has the same effect in calling up these artificial associations, as the sight or recollection of an actual existence has in calling up whatever we have associated with it.—The mode of mind is in both cases very similar, and if the former may be said to be a mode of reasoning without terms, the latter may with equal propriety be defined a process of ideality with them. We apprehend that this similarity has had some influence in obscuring the relations of poetry and prose. It makes the apparent difference in the processes less than it really is, and it seems altogether disproportioned to the results. But it must be remembered that although these modes of mind are in this one respect similar, its action is very much modified by the nature of the materials which it acts upon. Ideals expand, terms narrow the path in which it advances. Ideality is co-extensive with thought and sentiment; abstraction cannot extend beyond the contracted limits to which a precise language is applied. Here we perceive a vast difference, and we have endeavored to preserve the

distinction, by applying the term reasoning, when used without explanation, only to the forms of abstraction. But if in accordance with common custom and learned authority, we define this term to imply that process of the mind by which it deduces consequences justly from premises, or by which it arrives at the unknown by combinations of the known, it embraces both of these modes. The one is the reasoning of the nominalists, the other is the nearest possible approach to that of the realists. The nominalists compress a subject until the mind can survey it at once. Their definitions are often mere hypothesis, having no *necessary* connexion with reality, but so framed as to involve certain consequences, and their reasoning is but an arrangement of terms, more clearly showing that these consequences are thus involved. This is emphatically the case in mathematics, the most perfect specimen of nominal or verbal reasoning. In this science the same definition always attaches to the same word, but in connexion with these words, and more especially in the application of the algebraic modes, we use letters of the alphabet, or any other marks which have no particular meaning, but in each individual case are supposed to represent such quantity or property as renders them most fit for the purposes for which they are immediately wanted. They are signs to which any hypothesis may be attached; terms, whose significations are made to vary according to circumstances. The associa-

tions with them, or their definitions for the time being, are dependant on our will. We make them expressly for the ocasion, we limit and fit them as we choose, and hence are in little danger of misapplying them. By this artifice, this mode of reasoning from definitions is extended to minuter divisions of cases, which, if terms with unvaring definitions were used, would require more words or signs of some kind, than now exist in our whole language.

Before we can apply the results of this or any other nominal reasoning to practice, we must be certain that we have a case conformable to the hypothesis. In the application of mathematics, we are often enabled to do this. In the measurement of matter, we can divide it into shapes nearly approaching to those of which it treats, and the motions of the heavenly bodies are, with small variations, in curves whose properties are accurately expressed in its definitions. In point of accuracy, mathematical reasoning has an advantage in dealing with nothing but quantity. However different the shapes which it compares, they may still be considered as in this respect homogenious; they are all quantity, and to the mind of the mathematician, nothing but quantity. Every form of it is measured by a portion of itself, a facility which we cannot have with subjects which are in their nature indivisible, as love, virtue, honor, happiness, &c. Still this, in common with all nominal reasoning, goes

no farther than to meet specific cases. The general rules elicited, may assist the judgment, and enter into the composition of that common sense opinion, which is within the province of ideality. The mathematician, for instance, may calculate the flow of water in channels supposed to be rectangular, circular, or of any other given form, and tell us the effect of the increase or decrease of quantity, or of inclination, &c.; but in the application of the formula, deduced from each hypothesis to actual existences, to rivers in their unequal winding channels, such great and various allowances must be made, that at best they make but a portion of the circumstances which go to form our opinions.—Considering this difficulty of making the definitions, or the hypothesis on which verbal reasoning always depends conformable to actual existences, and that the process of ideality is always ready based on these actual existences, it is at least conceivable that the difficulties and chances of error in the adaptation of the former, may be greater than those which arise from the vague and indefinite expansion of the ideals used in the latter mode; and that this may be preferable in many of the practical concerns of life, in which the circumstances and their combinations are so various that no general rules can embrace them all. No mode of applying to this variety variable terms, like those which give algebra such a diffused and universal application to questions of quantity, has yet been devised. It is

conceivable that something of this kind might be done in other departments of thought, but when we reflect, that in applying it to the every day concerns of life, the principal object would be, to estimate the effect of flowing events on our happiness, and then consider the endless variety, the infinite combination and *undefinable* nature of these circumstances, and the various effects of the same causes on different individuals, the obstacles appear insurmountable. An arrangement of terms, which would meet all the cases which arise, must be as subtle and diffusive as spirit, and its distinctions be as nicely shaded as those of thought itself. We apprehend that mind alone possesses the pliancy which admits of this universal adaptation, and that it must lose its expansive energy before its primitive perceptions will be thus overtaken by terms.

But to show how far these latter now fall short of the wants of our being, we will take a case of far narrower limits.

The combinations on the chess-board, though vast in number, are finite. Yet how vain would be the attempt to give rules for every case which could possibly arise. It is conceivable, it is even obviously possible that it might be done, but when accomplished, a life would be too short to learn it. If therefore we cannot, by means of general rules, learn to play this game, which has only finite combinations, what can we expect from them when ap-

plied to the more complicated game of life, in which the combinations are infinite, and the circumstances often as little within our control, and as unexpected as the moves made by an antagonist on the chess board. We apprehend that in both cases, the only proper way is, after deriving what assistance we readily can from general rules, to look at the actual existences, to combine and examine the particular circumstances as they arise, to suppose a particular course adopted, and see what consequences will probably follow, and by this process of ideality determine how to move or act. This mode seems to have been preferred by a large portion of mankind, especially in the great questions connected with morals and religion. It is not always as certain as if more time were devoted, and every conceivable case examined in all its bearings and tendencies with the aid of terms, but it is the only one which admits of practical application. It enables us promptly to apply that great moral law, "to do unto others as we would that they in similar circumstances should do to us," for the means by which we ascertain what we would that they should do to us is evidently a process of ideality. It is the only way in which a large portion of mankind are able to examine and to determine many matters in which they are greatly interested. We may often observe the failure of good men in stating general rules, whose consciences would leave them at no loss as to how



they should act, in any of the particular cases arising under them. All have not the time, the skill, nor can all spare from other proper pursuits, the intellectual capital necessary to perfect the verbal machinery required, to examine high and important questions; and the attempt unsuccessful, or not persevered in, would only entangle and perplex them. It is more prudent and safe for such, to do what they require for their own home use, in the simple, natural way, and leave to philosophers the business of supplying the world, by the operation of complicated machinery which they better understand. We cheerfully commit to them the task of fitting and regulating the action of that enginery which is to convert the pliable materials of ideality into fixed and rigid maxims, meeting every case of morality, and answering all the purposes of religion, and by which its advocates hope to give stability to the changing forms and hues by which religious observances and opinions are adapted to the various conditions of society, and to reconcile their endless variety in one beautiful, harmonious system. They have not however, as yet been able to exclude numerous errors and discrepancies, and however rapidly they may perfect it, we apprehend that the equally improving optics of ideality, will continue to detect such imperfections. Still their persevering industry has accomplished much, and we regard the deficiencies alluded to, not as a fault of theirs, or of the means

which they employ, but as necessarily connected with all subjects which admit of no limitation. Morality and religion,—the relations of man with his fellow beings and with his God, are of this infinite kind. They cannot therefore be fully embraced by terms, and ideality will always perceive more of them, than abstraction has reduced to order. This is the natural progress of knowledge. The vague and conjectural, becomes distinct and certain. Demonstration follows on the rear of fancy. Yet we do not apprehend that the progress of truth has any influence in circumscribing her flight. Philosophy may condense the mists in which ideality shapes her fairest forms, and with them may vanish the gorgeous rainbow, and the prismatic splendour, with which this poetic power had adorned them. These beautiful effects of uncombined, confused, and perverted light, may no longer glitter in the eye of the poet, but the mist, condensing into the dew of science, has refreshed his imagination, and opened to his vision more distant prospects. With fresh hopes and invigorated powers, he takes a loftier flight, and in the indistinct perceptions, which still form the boundary of his extended vision, shapes new and more perfect beauty, and finds sublimer and more exciting mystery.

Poetry is relatively farther advanced in an uncultivated state of society, or rather when science is just dawning on the benighted age, because then

the artificial language of abstraction is very imperfect, and thought is of necessity pursued by means of processes of ideality, and expressed in the language adapted to that mode. The genius of a people thus circumstanced, is forced into this channel, and poetic forms of thought and expression become habitual. The resources of the poet are then more various, and more accessible, for all the great truths are beyond the limits to which philosophical language has advanced. They are in the vague poetic state, and furnish ample materials for ideality. These are first presented in their most striking aspect, and associated in a manner, which however beautiful, would not be likely to occur to those who discerned their real connexions, but which being always conceivable, appear as distinct creations of the poet. Our admiration of the genius which conceived them, increases, as the advancement of truth shows them to have little or no foundation in reality, and he who supposed himself only narrating his discoveries, obtains praise for inventing or creating. The language in which the early poets have thus expressed themselves, becoming identified with indistinct perceptions, or erroneous and delusive associations, is rendered unfit for philosophical accuracy, and hence it is allowed to retain its poetic expansibility.

From this view of the subject it appears that the sphere of poetry must be continually changing, that in an ignorant state of society it admits of a larger

infusion of narrative and physical knowledge, and advances on the verge of literature, to the higher departments of moral and intellectual science, which are now its principal elements. If ever the mysteries of our nature, and the relations of society, should be fully developed, and accurately expressed in words, it would be driven from these to yet higher objects. The mysteries of the infinite mind in its various manifestations, and the numberless relations by which, through eternity, it is united to the finite, would then become more exclusively its appropriate themes.

As philosophy is extended, poetry, always occupying the circle beyond it, recedes, and fewer will get through the mass of science which intervenes. This is particularly the case when a sudden impulse is given to abstract knowledge. The progress of the poet is then impeded, and his vision obstructed by the unarranged and partially condensed materials with which philosophy is engaged. The atmosphere is not then sufficiently clear for distant observation, and to make what is already within the sphere of concrete science the subject of poetry, would be to retrograde. It would be using a telescope to look at objects near to us. To verify its facts, is an exercise of ingenuity very similar to that of arranging the mathematical shapes of a Chinese puzzle, into given prescribed figures.

The novels of the present age are narration, with a large infusion of ideality, and the favor with which they have been received by the public, is a cheering evidence that this principle has not been eradicated by the encroachments of physical science, and that it is not confined to the few who have successfully cultivated it, but is still diffused through all classes of society. We give them credit for something more than the evidences of these facts. We regard them as having conduced to it; as having at least aided to keep alive the germs of this high but neglected endowment. In these works of fiction, it has assumed the guise of reality and mingled with the utilitarian topics, which now almost exclusively occupy the public mind. In the productions of Scott, it portrays character, sentiments, and affections, as they exhibit themselves in society, and in those of Bulwer, it is advancing to more remote portions of metaphysics.

Repressed by the force of circumstances, it still infuses its spirit into the material science of the day, and its animating beams, though shorn of their brilliancy, still light and cheer the path of improvement.

How far cultivation and moral purity may increase the clearness of perception, and give at once extension and certainty to the processes of ideality, we pretend not to know. There are those who, habituating themselves to silent meditation, and carefully avoiding the usual modes of reasoning, sometimes arrive at results so suddenly, so vividly portrayed, and by means so difficult to trace, that they appear to flash upon them from some unseen source, and they ascribe them to inspiration. We are not disposed to differ with them about this term as thus applied, though we may deem it more nearly allied to poetic inspiration than they would be willing to admit. To us it seems to be an inference, or impression, derived immediately from the perceptions or ideals in the mind—a process of ideality, quickened by a pure enthusiasm and dignified by its objects. Being good, we agree with them that it comes from the source of all good. We agree with them that it is the reward of patient seeking and holiness of thought; but whether as a natural consequence of this hallowed meditation, or as an immediate and special act of divine favor, is a question which is involved in the more general, and very interesting inquiry, whether the creation is governed by natural, self-sustaining laws, or by the immediate volitions of Deity, or partly by both. We agree with them that it is in every

sense of the word the *quicken*ing principle, that it is superior to all other human endowments, but we would still pronounce it human; or with them, admitting it to be divine, we would call it the divinity of human nature. It is literally, as they express it, a working of the spirit, but it seems to be a common opinion with them, that this spirit is not an attribute of themselves, but a distinct, independent power, over which they can exert no control, but must be mere passive recipients of its manifestations. The obvious tendency of such a belief is to prevent exertion, and their faith in it is probably strengthened by the greater ease with which truth is perceived in this mode than it can be attained by reasoning. The difference is analogous to that of observing the equality of two figures when one is applied directly to the other, or determining the same fact by means of a geometrical demonstration. In the first case we ascertain it without any conscious effort—we perceive it, as we perceive intuitive truth when we compare our perceptions immediately with each other. In the latter, it requires labor and attention to trace the equality of figures, as it does the agreement of ideas through the medium of terms. The error to which we have alluded, is however principally in terms. Experience teaches the disciples of this doctrine that some efforts on their part, and some mental exercises of their own are necessary antecedents to this working of the spirit, and the practical evil is



thus, in a great measure, avoided. In these meditations, they arrive at higher views of their destiny—they more clearly discern the means of attaining it, and however deficient their views may still be, or however short of what more gifted spirits may have entertained, it is still to them a revelation.—The exalted pleasure they derive from these sudden manifestations, and a vivid perception of their real or supposed importance, united to a philanthropic and generous enthusiasm to extend the knowledge of these sources of happiness, imparts to them an unwonted fervor and eloquence apparently supernatural.

Such we apprehend is the rationale of Quakerism. The practical application and improvement of the elastic principles of ideality, with its expansive power unshackled by creeds, has enabled an unlearned people to make great advances in spiritual truth, while their ignorance of this grand element of their own system will account for some extravagances or errors into which it has led them. Not recognising this sublime agent of discovery and advancement as an attribute of humanity, they have ascribed its effects to the immediate and special interposition of the Deity, and thus overlooked this secondary means of his manifestation. A predominance of this principle, and an habitual reliance upon it, has had its influence upon the society to which we have alluded, and given them a character for caution and prudence in the manage-



ment of their secular concerns, which probably has in part arisen from its protecting them from engaging in those visionary schemes which are based on fine spun reasonings, and which from the importance which the absence of other sources of aggrandizement has led them to attach to wealth, they would be peculiarly obnoxious to, were it not for this countervailing tendency to distrust results which arise only from a skilful arrangement of terms, which they frequently call "vain reasoning." It is not unworthy of remark, that these same people believe, that by attention to these inward teachings, they arrive at a higher degree of purity and refinement than can otherwise be attained, and that when thus far advanced, they can, in some favored moments, communicate one with another without any external means. We must confess, that although this is precisely what we have supposed to be an effect of spiritual advancement, yet we can no more conceive that such an effect, without a greater change in the condition of man than is apparent in this world, is embraced in that hypothesis, than we can conceive intuition, as we have just explained it, to extend to those long arithmetical calculations made by persons who are apparently deficient in every other faculty. The great interest felt on such occasions, may direct the attention with corresponding intensity, and all the circumstances in which the one is placed may be realized by the other in the form of ideals, and

produce in him similar emotions. It is then only like causes producing like effects. It is a state of highly excited sympathy in which they enter into the circumstances and participate in the feelings of each other. In the exact sciences, a problem being mentally investigated by a number of individuals understanding the subject, and then expressed in the proper terms, would in most instances be recognized by each of them as his own train of reasoning; and on many questions which admit of greater diversity, there will be a few channels of thought, some one of which, those who think of the subject will pursue, and thus produce many coincidences of argument and conclusion. So in the instances we are considering, the circumstances being known and pondered upon, produce similar states of mind. It is true, that it is more difficult to say precisely what feelings will be produced by known circumstances. There is a greater latitude, and the coincidences will, from this cause, be less frequent. As an offset to this, the terms in which these excited feelings are expressed, have an almost equal latitude. Added to this, the feelings themselves may be of a very vague and indistinct character, and being expressed in terms equally vague, each may suppose his own ideals properly represented by the same form of words, though in reality varying in no small degree from each other.

We will here remark an evil, not as attaching to

this sect in particular, but as arising among sectarians generally, from the exclusion or neglect of verbal reasoning. The want of the habit of thinking abstractly, leads them to associate what they deem wrong principles, so closely with sects and individuals, that their abhorrence of the erroneous doctrines, becomes rancour towards those who profess them. But to return. We have followed the views of the society of friends farther than we at first intended, at once to point out what we believe to be errors arising from the exclusion of verbal reasoning, and to exhibit the effect of a steady disciplined attention to one of the forms of ideality.

They probably prefer to be considered the peculiarly favored of heaven, and the recipients of its immediate dispensations; but we deem it no less honorable among men, nor less equivocal evidence of acceptance with God, that they have so cultivated this exalted principle, that its manifestations, true to its divine character, appear to them of celestial origin, and exert a celestial influence.

As a means of human advancement we are far from considering this high endowment as exclusively attaching to any sect. It is the mode which must be more or less resorted to by all patient enquirers after truth. It is the poetic temperament,—the divellant properties of the soul, which will extend themselves into the hidden infinite, but partially subdued, and made subservient to the high purposes of human advancement. It exhibits itself

not in lightning gleams, but curbed in its erratic course, and softened and diffused over the space which lies between that which is tangible and that which is inscrutable, revealing in its gloaming light, truths over which abstraction has not yet extended the pale of demonstration. It requires great care and application to keep the mind in that state which admits of intuitive certainty, for as we are not fully aware of the elements which go to form our conclusions, we have no opportunity of correcting them by an analytic examination, and a single error may warp and vitiate all our views of a subject. Indeed, one of the greatest defects of those who rely on this principle to the exclusion of reasoning, is that they cannot distinguish its results from other impressions unconsciously received, and hence they are as tenacious of traditional error as of revealed truth. This makes it necessary frequently to apply the test of reasoning; to express the ideals or primitive perceptions of the mind in terms, and examine their relations. This would be productive of the more happy results, as the votaries of abstraction are obnoxious to errors of an opposite character. They are more liable to be led astray by the bewitchments of prohibition, and the plausibility which their reasoning gives to new opinions insufficiently investigated. They moreover, of necessity, acquire a habit of regarding only the signs, and however clearly and certainly they may arrive at conclusions, forget that

these conclusions are founded on hypothesis, involved in the definitions of their terms. They do not see *things* vividly, but perceive only the *signs* which they have substituted for them, and hence their power of examining actual existences is lessened. By degrees, the abstractions obtain in their minds the place of realities, so far, that in some instances, they become the ultimate objects of thought, and the signs are invested with all the attributes which belong to that which they signify. The expression *natural laws*, or *laws of nature*, is a remarkable instance in point, and some philosophers have not only fallen into the absurdity of giving to these mere words a power over matter, but in their zeal to get rid of a universal superintending intelligence, have adopted an hypothesis, which of necessity, presumes that matter is universally intelligent. For it is obvious that government *immediately* by law, presupposes a knowledge of the law; and of course, intelligence, on the part of the governed.

The opposite evils of which we have spoken as arising from the exclusive use of ideality and abstraction, are neutralized by a combination of these poetic and prosaic modes of investigation. This combination would naturally occur, and the language of precision would be continually adapted and applied to the suggestions of intuition, were it not that on some important subjects, a sort of odium, a vague suspicion, has attached to those

who attempted to apply this severe but essential means of correction. They are pragmatism with our household deities. They interfere with established prejudices, and make us distrust early impressions and endeared associations. They banish forms of expression hallowed by recollections of youth and purity, and which however illogical, were perhaps in our minds so modified as to harmonize with correct principles and exalted virtue. Still they must abide their fate. They must die the death of error. We are slow to admit the propriety of such harsh treatment of sentiments which we had long revered. If we suspect we were wrong, we are almost ready to wish we had remained so, and even when we assent to the justice of the sentence, suspect the executioner of reckless and unfeeling hardihood. Hence it is, that errors are suffered to accumulate until their glaring absurdity gives confidence to the votaries of abstraction, and induces them boldly to apply the test of terms.

They modify the existing, or frame a new system, retaining of the old all that will abide this test, and rejecting much that is absurd and contradictory.— They thus form a foundation on which to erect a superstructure of substantial truths. Their thoughts partake of its strength and firmness; their philosophy is sound, their perceptions are vigorous and clearly expressed, but a religion which is contained in precise finite terms, is inadequate to the boundless cravings of the soul. The ardor of discovery;

the fervor of improvement; the confidence of demonstration; the pleasure derived from clearer, self-reconciling, systematic views, may for a time, be alone sufficient to sustain its votaries, but these very causes will at length bring them to a point at which terms will fail to bear them forward, or even to express what their enlarged views have enabled them to discover of the numerous and delicate relations which exist between the finite spirit and the infinite. Their advancement in thought, has then outstripped their improvement of its signs. Their attempts to express its results are consequently not understood, and the Babel which they hoped to raise to the skies, is by this confusion of language, arrested in its progress, and its founders dispersed to cultivate various portions of the world of thought, and to seek their way to Heaven, each in his own path of duty and virtue. But they have already accomplished much; they have discarded error, and acquired and made known the means of its exclusion. They have reduced knowledge to a form in which it may be imparted and made useful to the ignorant; and in the prosecution of this work, they have improved the means of social intercourse, and given to words a power, and expression, and pervading subtlety, little short of the original thoughts which they represent. Still it is insufficient. The more ethereal (probably the more ethereal sex) will be the first to feel that its abstractions are too cold to express their heartfelt emo-



tions, too limited too meet their expanding views of moral excellence. They will be the first to discover, that there is a spiritual refinement, which it has not power to portray—a holy charm, a sublime mystery, which it does not approach.

The intuitive principle here again resumes its sway. Ideality is again in the ascendant. It commences in a higher sphere, and with an activity increased by the accumulation of truth, and freedom from error, advances with a rapidity which soon induces the want of something in which to embody its accumulated discoveries. Some of the most cultivated and gifted spirits will naturally adopt the language of ideality or primitive perceptions, and their most etherial thoughts will bear this impress of their poetic origin: but in the dearth of language, and of skill in its application, ambiguous, unmeaning, and even absurd phrases may be adopted by the many, as the nucleus around which each arranges his own peculiar and indistinct notions. In process of time, some of the crude maxims of the one class, acquire undue importance as relics of ancient wisdom, and the refined poetic illustrations of the other, are received as literal prosaic assertions, but still carry with them all the authority of inspiration.

These causes, in addition to the constant mutations of language, give rise to mysticisms, which are too often impressed on succeeding generations, as indissolubly connected with the brightest and



purest truths which hallow the thought of man.— Among those who thus receive them, will be some with sufficient sagacity to detect the error, but not having sufficient philosophy to separate it from the truths with which they have always seen it united, discard the whole as an imposition on common sense, and as insulting to their understandings. Finding that to be false, which they had from infancy looked upon as indisputable, they view every thing else with suspicion, and abandon themselves to a universal skepticism. Others of the same class, scarcely less unfortunate, give up the matter in despair of understanding it, and passively yield to the faith of childhood and the nursery. From these, nothing is to be expected; they make no effort at improvement, but sluggishly pursue the beaten track, with at best no higher virtue than the absence of crime, no higher motive than present enjoyment, and exemption from present care and perplexity. Fortunately for the cause of human advancement, there is another class, who will be at the pains to analyze these absurdities, to extract the diluted truths which have given them currency, and concentrating them in the terms of an improving language, transmit them to posterity as pure chrystals, unalloyed with error, unclouded by mystery, undisturbed by contradictions.

In the department of physics, we often observe phenomena, which we cannot account for upon any

known principles, or which we cannot class with any already established genera. These mysteries of the material universe, are continually yielding to the advances of science, and opening the way to others before unnoticed. They are occasionally rendered more obscure by unskilful expressions and blind prejudices, but in the main are well defined. In this class we may rank what for the time being are ultimate principles, the cause of the polarity of light, of magnetism, its connexion with electricity, and other facts which have been observed, but which apparently are not referable to any known laws. In the moral and intellectual world, phenomena analogous to these are presented; but here, the difficulties arising from ill applied terms, and from long established prejudices, become much greater and cause gross absurdities. Hence has arisen a feeling against mysteries, and disposed many to discard them entirely, but this is to circumscribe themselves within present defined limits, and bars all further progress. Others, with the blindness of bigotry, admit the mysteries in whatever form they may have already assumed, and however preposterous they may appear, deny the expediency of any change, and even the propriety of any inquiry. It is thus that what at first were cheering anticipations of truth distorted by ignorance, and clouded by superstition, are perpetuated as errors, and throw their darkening shadows over the very spots they at first illumined. The

rational mysteries of the moral and intellectual world, arise from those ineffable visions which are arrived at when the noble sallies of the soul carry it beyond its usual limits, and afford it transient and indistinct perceptions of something, which it cannot define or represent by signs, but which serve to awaken curiosity and stimulate inquiry.

This field of imperfect discovery the mind fills with beautiful ideals, and in its contemplation realizes with delightful certainty that it is still free, still expanding, and has ample space for the exercise and improvement of its invigorated powers. Such mysteries, and their happy influences, are the result of processes of ideality, leading us forward, sometimes so far as to strain our feeble powers, and far, very far, beyond the application of terms or signs. Their changing forms are seen only in the mists of poetry, but yielding gradually to increasing light and knowledge, they assume a settled form, and are embodied in the language of abstraction, which changes them from the poetic form of ideality, and as it is well or ill applied, converts them into philosophical truths or prosaic errors.

We have spoken of the happy influence of mysteries, but we must be understood as meaning only those mysteries which are continually hovering near the outer verge of science, and which, however far we may extend our views will continue to unfold themselves in the expanding horizon.—

These, as we have before remarked, are rational mysteries. Language not having been extended to them, they are exclusively in the province of ideality; and are widely different from those verbal mystifications, contradictions and absurdities, which in some instances have been substituted for them. These have been held out to mankind as false lights, involving them in inextricable difficulties. They have been presented as the objects on which to direct the sublime power of improvement, but all hope of advancing denied them. In very mockery of their human wants, and divine aspirations, something having the appearance of the unplucked fruit of knowledge has been presented to them, but they forbidden, under the most terrible penalties, to taste or touch it, and with the infinite tendencies of the soul thus shackled, they have been told to rest their highest hopes on the verity of verbal involutions, which they are authoritatively told, they cannot and ought not to unfold. The expansive power thus directed against an obstacle which is deemed insurmountable, loses its elasticity, and the mind learns submission to a state of passive, unchanging ignorance.

The free spirit which has escaped these fetters, is always pressing forward. In its bold incursions into the infinite, it is continually making discoveries, but superstition too often follows, and with the iron grasp of tyranny, seizes the new domain. To rescue these fair provinces from this gloomy

despotism, becomes the object of succeeding philosophers. They bring all the force of well marshalled terms to aid them in the enterprise. But what avails this array of strength in a crusade against a subtle enemy, continually shifting its position, and always eluding attack. But though the toil of philanthropic philosophers has apparently been in vain—though the life stream of the inspired enthusiast has scarcely sufficed to moisten the arid sands on which it has freely flowed—though the very soil on which truth first shone, may be held by the ignorant and benighted, and superstition still sway its sceptre over these fair portions of this holy land, yet truth itself is ever gradually and silently accomplishing its objects, and at length, manifests itself with such universal power, that prejudice yields, and even bigotry feels its influence.

The mysteries of ideality are as graceful, yielding, glowing clouds, seen through the atmosphere of knowledge. Like the distant nebula, they tell the philosopher that all beyond is not a void—that there still exists a field of discovery—that what now appears unconnected, or at best an excrescence, may, to his expanding views, become harmoniously reconciled in the arrangements of a larger sphere, and what now seems only an obscure speck, may with distinct and brilliant rays, light and guide him on his way to unthought of discoveries. They thus awaken in the soul a consciousness of the

boundless nature of truth, and of the infinite progression of its own immortal powers. They inspire it with enthusiasm, and rouse it to that exertion which is necessary to the fulfilment of its highest destinies. These indistinct primitive perceptions—these adumbrations of truth, which dawn on the free and aspiring mind, are directly opposed to those spurious mysteries, which consist of artificial arrangements of terms, and are sustained by repressing inquiry and keeping the mind in that state of darkness which precludes examination. These are as dense mists around us, in which we may conjure up many strange phantoms, but must be dispelled before we can see any thing clearly or aright. They obstruct our vision, weaken our powers, retard our progress, and some of them, especially the dogmas of religion, dampen ardor and hide from us the brightest paths and fairest fields of human investigation. There is, however, one circumstance, which gives these artificial mysteries an advantage over the natural. Having already assumed the concrete form, they are fixed and inflexible.—Continually presented to us with the same aspect, they take a stronger hold of our perceptions.—Through all the changing scenes of life they remain the same. They are as plants of the joyous spring of existence, which however worthless, have not decayed. They have not improved by cultivation, but like noxious weeds, producing no good fruit, have been suffered to grow for want of it. In them

mind makes no progress. On them time makes no impression. The observances connected with them are the same, and carry with them into age the associations of youth. They form a continuous chain to whose uniform links are united all the recollections of the past, and all the anticipations of the future. A thread of fiction stringing together the realities of life. They make a portion of the uniform web on which is woven the varied colors which brighten and shade existence. Nor are these counterfeit mysteries wholly without these better influences which appertain to the real. Those who are deceived with them, receive a baser coin than is issued from the mint of truth; but that they have thus received them, is an evidence that the love of truth remains. That portion of prospective happiness which arises from the consciousness that mind has not yet filled the measure of its capacities may be associated with them. They are all that he is permitted to conjecture of the bright paths which would lead him to a higher sphere. Human skill may have made the perspective so imposing, that instead of mere proximate illusions of light and shade, they appear to the victim of the deception as realities extending far beyond his earthly hopes. To him they are still truth in an inscrutable guise, and may still excite in him that devotion, which when rightly appreciated, she always inspires. He may listen to the voice which is his authority for what is yet undiscovered. He may again and again

repeat the mystic rites, which serve to amuse his hopes without awakening exertion; and he may visit the scenes where these mysteries have been made familiar to him, and ponder on the visible types of invisible truth, as we linger around the grave of friendship, while we expect to meet the spirit which consecrates the spot only in another world. And this veneration for what he is told is the robe of truth, this devotion for all which bears her impress, may prevent a reckless scepticism, and sustain some of the better feelings, of the existence of which they are undoubted evidence.—The evil is that they will not allow these better feelings to expand and improve. They cramp the soul, and if it ever discovers that its affections have been misplaced and fastened on worthless absurdities, its confidence in the virtuous principles which it had been taught to associate with them, is weakened, if not destroyed.



IN the formation of character, ideality exerts an influence of the highest importance. It is the channel by which the conceivable objects of desire or aversion are brought nearest to the springs of voluntary action. From those supposeable events which are continually flowing through the mind, we form rules of conduct or receive impressions which imperceptibly govern us in the concerns of real life. It is in meditation that we nurture those innate feelings, which give impulse to action, and determine its mode. He who accustoms himself to this discipline—who withdraws from the bustle of the world, and in tranquility contemplates imaginary cases, and determines how he ought to act under them, frames for himself a system of government, with less liability to error, than he can do in the tumultuous scenes of life. He is not swayed by those interests and passions which so often distort the views of those who act from the impulse of immediate and pressing circumstances. The beautiful and the good rise in glowing forms before him and light his path to excellence. The processes of ideality in which he indulges, may not exactly fit the occasions which actually arise, but in the vast number of them which even the most busy life admits of, there will probably be found many which are in some degree applicable to every contingency. They will at least furnish analogies and give

him habits of disinterested thought which lead to high and correct views of duty and propriety.

He who habitually cultivates thoughts of peace, who lives in an ideal harmony with all around him, and moistens the tenderness of his nature at the pure fountains of an indwelling benevolence, renders himself more susceptible to the pleasures of society, and less obnoxious to the cross incidents which sometimes mar its happiness. If these unopportunately happen to disturb him, he finds in his primitive perceptions of the moral beauty of kindness and social order, a balsam for his wounded spirit, which soothes the painful asperity of his lacerated feelings, and restores him to tranquility and cheerfulness. He who in all the fancied or expected collisions of interest or opinion, maintains a calm and unruffled temper; represses the irritable feelings, and calls into action those which are mild and conciliating, is fortifying himself against the rude attacks of the world, and elevating himself above its petty conflicts. Thus prepared, he meets the crosses and trials which are the lot of existence, with fortitude and serenity. To him they are but occasions for the exercise of those amiable virtues which he has drawn from the pure sources of ideality. They enable him to act out what he has conceived. Like the majestic oak he derives strength from the storms which assails him. Without this happy internal agency which is ever exerting its unsuspected power, the character would be formed

and developed only by the occurrences of life, and we should always be obliged to judge of propriety at the very moment when we should be most liable to be biased by the influence of peculiar circumstances, interest or passion. Feelings thus brought into exercise only amid the stir and strife of the world, would probably become coarse, harsh and selfish. The processes of ideality may correct this tendency—may refine the affections and give liberality to sentiment. They can soften the rigid feelings, and mould them in their own forms of beauty, but at the same time when perverted they greatly increase the evil which they should be made the means of averting.

Situations of difficulty and danger, induce a corresponding cultivation of those sterner qualities which are then required. The savage, in continual danger of attack, sustains his warlike spirit by imaginary achievements accomplished in ideal conflict with the enemies of his tribe. He fancies himself in mortal combat, and feels the glow of martial enthusiasm thrill through his veins, exciting him to deeds of valor or desperation.

He conceives himself the fettered victim of the strife, and nerves himself to endure the torture with uncomplaining fortitude. Courage and a power of endurance, with them, are the highest attainments,—these occupy their thoughts; and that their growth is stimulated by processes of ideality, is evinced in their rude songs—the barbarous poe-

try, in which these processes naturally find utterance. These depict warlike courage, soul-inspiring danger, and heroic fortitude. All this may be necessary in the rude state of society, when there are no laws to counteract brute force, but even in its more advanced state, analogous causes undo the effects of civilization, and generate the savage character in the midst of refinement. He who has been compelled into keen collision with others, fosters the energies which are requisite in the strife, and sometimes acquires a morbid taste for such excitements after the occasions for them have passed away. When this is the case, his ideal processes flow in the same channel. Discord, and its attendant train of disturbing influences continually occupy his mind. His spirit becomes fiery and ferocious; his will impetuous and impatient of control. The malignant passions habitually acquire a dreadful ascendancy. Embittered feeling, demoniac rage, and furious revenge, become the elements in which he lives, and inhales a stimulus, which gives frantic vigor to the worst passions of the heart, while its poison intoxicates, convulses and maddens the soul.

But low as he has thus fallen, he has not yet reached the worst condition. While he acts from impulse, even though it be the impulse of fierce and disturbing passion, he will still exhibit something of the greatness of his nature. The unsubdued energy of purpose, strong determination, un-

conquerable will—his very recklessness, impress us as the over excited action of a noble though perverted spirit—of a spirit, which like the tempest cloud, adds to the sublimity of the scene which it darkens. It glows not with the warm beams of heaven, nor reflects its 'softened rays, but while it rejects its benign radiance, from its dark bosom emits its own fierce and terrific gleams. And with these workings of power a sympathy is felt by milder and better natures. It is not until the processes of ideality, perverted to evil, and cramped within the little sphere of self, have gradually exterminated all spontaneous impulse, and substituted in its place, cold calculation, low cunning, and mean artifice, that the moral nature becomes wholly repulsive and disgusting. This is premeditated depravity. It is poisoning the fountain from which every action flows. To destroy the natural or early formed impulses is a work requiring no little pains. It is probably effected, by magnifying the advantages of selfishness, by recalling events in which a yielding to generous impulse has interfered with it, and searching out the modes by which, under similar circumstances, a repetition of it may be avoided. These are processes of ideality, in which the individual wilfully excludes the pleasures which arise from the generous emotions, and by this means destroys their natural connexion with the springs of action, and establishes in their room, a system of narrow prudential considerations,

which cramps and degrades his moral nature; induces a meanness incompatible with the dignity of virtue, and shuts out all the finest feelings and noblest aspirations of the soul.

It appears strange, that a labor, thus painful in its performance, and leading to such baneful results, should ever be accomplished. It is no doubt generally done with a view to some immediate object, without reference to its ultimate effect, and without a sufficient examination of the laws of our being. But even with his vision circumscribed by this culpable neglect, no one ever committed this cold-blooded mutilation of soul without a sense of the immediate violence and degradation, as none ever fostered the generous sentiments, without a feeling of exaltation and a conscious susceptibility to purer pleasures. The power which we exert over our moral nature, though less nobly exhibited, is more strongly attested by its perversion than by its improvement. In the formation of the avaricious character, for instance, more than in the most generous virtue. In the one case it seems to advance with perfect freedom in the path of its own choice and to be led forward by the delights which attend its progress. In the other it is forced back against the current of its affections, fettered and guarded with tyrannic vigilance, and made subservient to the most degrading purposes. The miser looks upon the man of liberality as one too weak to resist the dictates of generosity. He knows

the labor which his own prudence has cost him, and congratulates himself on his exemption from such benevolent frailties. The higher pleasures are to him unreal, and the pursuit of them visionary. In curbing the expansive tendency of his moral nature, he has shown us how great a power we may exert in controlling it, as the martyr who held his hand in the flames which consumed it, gave more striking proof of the power of the mental over the physical system, than the most skilful and useful application of it would have done.

That we have such a power of modifying our dispositions is perhaps sufficiently obvious, though too often overlooked in its practical application. The great means by which these modifications are effected, we believe to be processes of ideality, and that the principal causes of the wrong formation of character are the perversion of these processes to foster ignoble passions, and the want of their influence in counteracting the effects of external causes. Fortunately the occasions of life which have a tendency to warp the disposition, though frequent, have their intervals, are transient, and in some degree neutralize each other. The forms of ideality may always be brought to mind, and if we encourage the presence of those only which are pure and elevated, we shall, as a consequence, become more and more refined and ennobled. Without this countervailing principle, our moral nature would be the sport of chance, liable



to be irretrievably driven from its course, by every current of feeling and every storm of passion. Character would then depend on accidental and physical causes. But in the contemplation of the conceivable events which continually occupy the mind, and the careful retention of the primitive perceptions which inspire us with virtuous emotion, we find a more steady influence, which, with proper attention, counteracts the effects of accidents, elevates us above the power of circumstance, and effectually protects us from a fatality otherwise inevitable.

In the over active life of those who task their whole abilities in business pursuits, the succession of impelling circumstances is often so close as not to admit of a sufficient infusion of ideality to temper their irritating and engrossing influence, and the character is consequently in danger of losing its amiable and expansive qualities. The frequent occurrence of this has probably given rise to a not uncommon impression, that moral character is necessarily the result of external circumstances. And this we believe to be one reason of the too little value usually attached to it. We too often regard the possession of it, rather as an evidence of good fortune, than of a useful and wise discipline on the part of the possessor, and the exercise of it as a mere act of volition, involving no difficulty, and though deserving praise, yet calling for no distinction. Hence too it is, that we are prone to make the more palpably active intellectual powers the



standard of excellence, and the objects of our admiration.

But when we consider morality as the result of the most delicate cultivation, it assumes a higher elevation. We then look upon the actions of the virtuous, as but the indications of a harmony within, the expression of an instrument whose fine tones have been improved amid the discord of confused and troubled scenes. We are led to admire the moral energy which has infused itself into each delicate spring, and preserved its perfections amid the agitations to which it has been continually exposed.

We have already spoken of the power of ideality in enabling us to fall into the same channels of thought which our acquaintances would pursue. If we mistake not, this is particularly obvious in the application of it which we are now considering. How often when we have determined on a course of conduct, particularly when that determination is formed under the influence of exciting circumstances, are we led to suspect the propriety of it, by thinking how some friend would view it. We put ourselves in his position, look at it calmly, as he would do, endeavor to get the same aspect as would be presented to him, and then perhaps discover that our own vision had been distorted, and led into error. In this way, through the medium of this faculty, we make the virtue and discretion of our

friends available to us. We use their modes of thought to mould our own.\*

There is peculiar consolation in the consideration that mind possesses in these varied forms of ideality, an inherent power of resisting or modifying the influence of material causes; that it has a mode which is as near to our moral, as sensation is to our physical, nature. It elevates it to a more commanding eminence, gives it a tone of conscious superiority, and makes us feel at once the meanness of yielding, and our ability to triumph over the petty trials and temptations which assail us.

The examination of past conduct, and of supposed cases, is no doubt frequently performed in the abstract mode, but from the greater length of time which it requires, it is impossible that this method should always be resorted to, and when it is, although it may establish general principles, it is less moving, and has a less direct influence on the conduct, than those scenic representations which are so faithfully acted in the theatre within us. Ideality is in this respect the nearest approach to reality.

This expansive element, which thus exhibits itself in the formation of the most common charac-

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\* Charles Lamb, in alluding to his friend Coleridge, then recently deceased, says: "His great and dear spirit haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. *He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations.*"

ter, becomes more conspicuous, in those extraordinary manifestations of mind, which have occasionally illumined the world with a brightness almost superhuman.

In its most humble guise—that in which it mingles with the business of life, and in which its expansive power is almost neutralized by the predominance of the grosser nature, it is the basis of that common sense, which is universally regarded, not only as differing, but as somewhat opposed to the verbal refinement of those who, arriving at their conclusions through the medium of terms, can state them, however chimerical, in the plausible and imposing forms of syllogistic reasoning. It is sometimes this which induces a man to withhold his assent from the results of an argument which he cannot refute. The processes of ideality do not reveal to him the relation which the terms of the reasoner have pointed out. From this, the most alloyed form in which the etherial principle is observable, its inherent property is developed as it increases in purity, until it exhibits its divellent tendency in the random gleams of poetic phrenzy, giving in the distance transient and indistinct perceptions of whatever its uncertain flashes chance to beam upon; or still controlled and directed by a firm philosophy and ardent pursuit of truth, it expands under their influence, until embracing in the form of primitive perceptions, all the great attributes of man, and the laws which regulate his pro-

gression, it displays to its votaries the connexion between the present and the future with the clearness of revelation, and enables them to predict with inspired confidence. If in the earliest and weakest manifestation, when directed only to the little circle of events around us, incited only by a selfish interest—obscured by the mists of an imperfect morality, and liable to perversion from the wishes, the hopes, the fears, and the darker passions which agitate and perturb the undisciplined and unpurified mind. If under such circumstances it can enable us to anticipate some small portion of the future, can it be doubted that in its highest state of cultivation, when capable of embracing “all this maze of man,” when its perceptions are quickened by a pure morality, when inspired by a universal philanthropy, and all the feelings and passions of the man are merged in an enthusiastic devotion to truth; can it be doubted that these anticipations may then assume the importance, the reach, the dignity, and the certainty of prophetic revelation? Are not the superiority of the elements which are thus brought into action proportioned to such a result?

But we mean not to imply that this highly improved state of this endowment is common. On the contrary, he who has arrived at this state of refinement, this freedom from selfishness and the distractions of sense, this purity of passion and angelic devotion, has already attained an elevation far beyond the ordinary lot of mortals; and we have

before considered one essential element of this power, that of coping with general propositions in the form of ideals, as properly belonging rather to a higher state of existence. The spirit, then, which has attained such reach of thought and clearness of perception, has anticipated its destiny, and the attributes of humanity, by care and cultivation, have been early matured to the celestial. In such a spirit the etherial principle manifests itself in unwonted purity, and the impassioned soul, though wrought upon by its most expansive influence, still preserves its integrity and unity of purpose. In the highest exhibitions of its power, it seems borne forward on a whirlwind of thought, but in this moral tempest retains its self-possession, and with a tranquil, God-like power, directs and controls its lightning energies.

We would not be understood to say that this spiritual refinement of the processes of ideality, is the only source of prophecy. We are aware that this knowledge of the future may flow immediately from that infinitely purer fountain of all knowledge, to which the most advanced terrestrial spirit is but in the earliest stage of a never ending approximation. But we do wish to inculcate the idea, that in that portion of intelligence which is allotted to man, there is infused a principle, which in its lowest state, enables him to form probable conjectures of future events most connected with the objects of his thoughts, and that this principle admits of

indefinite improvement and extension. That when redeemed from a narrow selfishness, and unencumbered by the gross and sensual,—in short, when exerting its influence under circumstances similar to those which we have supposed to favor our progress in the hereafter, it will advance us to that purer region of knowledge, from which more distant portions of futurity are distinctly visible; and we would wish to direct attention to the similarity between the two sources of prophecy. They are both manifestations of spirit. One is infallible, and the other is the nearest approach of a finite intelligence to it. With the exception of a few recorded instances in which the great I AM revealed himself in articulate language, they are equally spiritual discernings of truth, and when God reveals the future by imparting more power and penetration to the purified spirit, and thus making its discernings more clear and certain, it still differs not from the processes of ideality in kind, but only in degree. It is then only an increase of the power which he originally gave. We are not prepared to call this miraculous, for if the Supreme Being governs inferior intelligences through the medium of fixed, natural laws, this increase of power may be a natural effect of increased purity and cultivation. Or, if he governs them by his immediate volitions, this result may still be conformable to the uniform modes which he has adopted.

We apprehend that on this subject, the views of

many have been perverted, by conceiving the supreme intelligence as existing only at a great distance from the little sphere of humanity; that there is a great void between, which omnipresence does not fill, and which omnipotence cannot traverse without an effort. But how much more just and ennobling is the conception that we are in the midst of this omnipresence—that our finite spirits are blended with the infinite—associated with it by innumerable relations, and with affinities continually increasing as it assimilates to it in purity and holiness—that we hold communion with omniscience—that through the medium of the material world we continually imbibe a knowledge of the ways of nature's God, while his spiritual revealings enlarge our views of moral excellence and light, and guide us in our progress towards perfection.

We wish not to lessen the estimation in which prophecy is deservedly held, and if we understand the application of our own views, they have no such tendency. He who has increased his powers by cultivating and purifying the talents allotted to him, we deem as worthy as if a new talent had been suddenly conferred upon him. He whose spiritual light has been permanently increased, we believe to be as much favored by heaven, as if he were only occasionally made the vehicle of its revelations to mankind.

Prophecy immediately revealed from God, has always been, as indeed it must needs be, accompa-



nied by such extraordinary manifestations, as not only to leave no doubt to its immediate recipient, but all who believe his account of it, must also believe the prediction to come from an infallible source. A simple narration of them is sufficient to produce an undoubting faith.

But those which are mere discernings of an inspired spirit, are unsupported by such supernatural occurrences, and their credibility must rest upon other circumstances. We can judge of them only by what they themselves present. They must bear the stamp of their high character and origin. Their own brightness must convince us that they come from the fountain of light. Such has been the case with those which have been accredited. They have contained their own intrinsic evidence. They have borne the impress which attested that they were the emanations of a gifted spirit. They have been stamped with the purest ideality, and clothed in the loftiest strains of poetry. It is the universal adaptation of this language to every degree of intelligence, which has made for them an avenue to every mind, and inspired with equal faith the weak and the wise, the ignorant and the learned.

The exceptions to its influence have generally been such as disciplined the reasoning faculty in the use of terms, to the exclusion of ideality, or such as cultivated this latter faculty, but applied it only to the purpose of producing illusion, and hence



had no good reason to rely upon its manifestations in others. They felt the movements of its power within them, but blended with the gross and sensual, had no adequate conceptions of the greatness of its purified nature.

It is often asserted that the age of prophecy has passed. With regard to that which is the immediate and miraculous manifestation of Deity, it becomes not us to speak; but concerning that which we have described as the result of processes of ideality, we may venture some remarks.

The effect which the sudden advancement of the physical sciences has had in changing our modes of thought and expression, has wrought an important change in this particular province of mind. Instead of stating the result of a process of ideality in its appropriate language, in which it would appear more oracular, these results are minutely traced, and the train of connexion carefully preserved through the medium of terms, and by this infusion of the prosaic, what in its original, poetic form would have appeared as prophecy, is reduced to the standard of common sense. The power of reaching the future through the medium of primitive perceptions is the highest effort of mind, and requires the most concentrated application of its undivided energies. Whatever then excites it to activity, and increases its power of attention, is favorable to this development. Intense interest enabled the empress Josephine to foresee the results

of a certain measure of Napoleon's, and had she stated those results in the less precise language of ideality, and without exhibiting the connecting train of reasoning, they might have passed for prophetic revelations. It is not then surprising that before the general introduction of the philosophic method, and especially in the times of high religious excitement which preceded it, that enthusiastic devotees should have often penetrated the future through the medium of ideals, to which their glowing imaginations imparted such vividness, that if not in reality, they might easily be mistaken for the inspirations of prophecy, and they have honestly believed themselves endowed with more than human foresight. What then would have appeared in the form of false prophecy, is now first converted into false philosophy or rejected in the attempt to embody it in concrete science.

We need not urge that this power by which we revive the past, brighten the present, and anticipate the future, is the highest endowment of humanity. It is also that attribute of the finite spirit, which most nearly corresponds to that of omnipresence in the infinite. By its exercise, every place and every object of its knowledge is made present to the mind, and if it be not equally proper to say that mind is present to them, is an equivalent, which in effect makes it not omnipresent, because, and only because, it is not omniscient and omnipotent.

For, if we knew all things, we could make them all present to us in the form of ideals, and if there were no limit to this power, we could embrace them all at once, and this would be equivalent to being every where present at the same time; or, if we may so express it, mind, as manifested in man, has a *finite presence*, which has the same relation to *omnipresence*, which its finite knowledge and power have to the other two great attributes of the universal intelligence.

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THE revealings of ideality require a constant improvement of the language in which they are expressed, and this in turn demands a corresponding progression, in the forms of abstraction, and induces a mode of mind which forms the first stage of its advancement from the finite to the infinite, and admits of such varied proportions of the gross and ethereal, that it can descend to the most selfish and narrow concerns, or closely following where ideality leads, rise in lofty and refined investigation to the most ennobling conceptions. This gives it a peculiar adaptation to our present mixed nature, preserving the physical, and improving the moral. It is the tempered light suited to our feeble vision. It has not the brilliancy of poetic fancy, but it pos-

sesses the enduring charms of substantial truth.—The language of abstraction is seldom found wholly unalloyed. It generally contains an infusion of ideality and by this combination acquires a pliancy which makes it more universally applicable to the subjects of thought. Cheered by this enlivening influence, and keeping on the firm ground of demonstration, the man of abstraction pursues the even tenor of his way amid all the trials and temptations which beset his path; or rising in lofty speculation above the little world of human care and perplexity, draws consolation or happiness from sources purely his own, and of which no vicissitudes of fortune can deprive him. He returns fortified by the results of mature investigation, and invested with a panoply of principles which prepares him for all the chances and changes of life. It imparts firmness to his virtue, and decision and energy to his action. It gives him a tone of conscious elevation which raises him above the ordinary vexations of life, and enables him to look on its joys and its sorrows with steadiness and serenity. He has measured the evils to which he is exposed, and knows his ability to endure them.

Nor are the effects of this power when exerted for the general welfare less happy. To superficial observers, the man of abstraction may for a time appear a soulless, uninteresting object. They will wonder how he can find amusement in abstruse and perplexing investigation. They cannot per-

ceive in the calm solitude of his bosom, the glowing ardor which sheds its mild but steady light on the engrossing objects of his unremitted toil. They cannot feel the fervor with which the simple charms of truth have inspired him. They suspect not that one apparently so cold and unyielding, is secretly actuated by the warm and generous feelings of universal philanthropy, and is unostentatiously bestowing the wealth of his time and talents for the permanent benefit of mankind. His mind appears to them a gloomy laboratory enveloped in smoke and mist. They will not be at the pains to examine his chymic processes, and are astonished when they result in such gleams of thought as shed an effulgence around him, and exhibit the bright truths which he has transmuted from error, or the pure and original excellence which he has freed from the dross which rendered it obscure. He has no servile regard for unfounded opinions; but inspired with a fearless love of truth, pursues it regardless of consequences, and never despairs of vanquishing error, whether it seeks to elude him in the subtle and imposing forms of mystery and superstition, or openly resists him with the arms of prejudice and the armor of ignorance. Throughout, language has been the means of his advancement. It led him forward in the path of demonstration.— It directed and gave certainty to the processes by which he discriminated truth, and furnished the

weapons with which he has successfully combatted its opposers.

The philosopher has thus attained a high elevation, but the poet seeks a yet higher sphere. He sets at nought the plodding calculations of a circumscribed utility, and, disgusted with the groveling pursuits which he observes engross the attention of man, wings his flight high in the airy fields of speculation, and lavishes the exuberance of his fancy on visionary splendors and the enticing charms of sentiment. His spirit-like perceptions no longer assume the garb of language, and seraph-winged thoughts lead him far into that higher sphere,

“Where each conceptinn is a heav’nly guest,”

and far beyond the little circle where every idea is clothed and made palpable in words, as a soul animating its embodying clay.

From this poetic elevation he looks down upon this little world, and throws over it and its concerns the bright hues of his own fervor, till in the distance it appears as a luminary fitted for the vault of heaven. Its coarse intrusions no longer disturb him. He looks above and around, and sees everywhere nature unfolding her graces. He brings all to his standard of ideal excellence, and revels in the luxury of his own creations. The visions of paradise float before his fancy, and the inspirations of his musings are as visitings from yet higher spheres. But how often in some momentary pause

when the imagination has become enfeebled by such vast, exciting, and long continued effort, does the thought that it is but a creation of fancy, burst with dread reality upon him, and dissipate the illusion. The veil which it cast over the realities of life is withdrawn, and the morbid sensibility of a heart accustomed only to ideal beauty and refinement, turns with loathing from its comparative deformity. Such is the regretted effect of this exalted talent when acting in excess, or unconnected with that faculty which sustains it with its strength, and receives in return grace, purity, and elevation. Yet if these inspirations have been embodied in language, they are not without their utility. They may then be made to mingle with the thoughts of less etherial minds, and neutralize the degrading tendency of grosser pursuits. The influence of poetry is in this respect of great importance, and admits of almost universal application. It commands the avenues to feeling, and there is hardly any state to which it cannot impart pleasure or consolation. It resorts not to the tedious manipulations of abstraction, but with a godlike power commands things to come forth and light to be. Are the spirits gay and buoyant, it touches some chord of rapture, and the heart yields its ready response. Is the mind oppressed with care, has the morning ray of hope ceased to illumine it, it extends its magic wand, and like the electric influence on the summer evening's cloud, suffuses it with the light



which more sunny hours had bestowed. But a mingling with terms is still necessary to make this influence; tangible, without it they would be mere shadows far too ethereal for our ordinary perceptions, and would be lost in the abyss of oblivion, from which even the magician who had once called them forth might not be able again to summon them.

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THE observation of the actual events and occurrences of life impels us to action. We witness misery and are moved to relieve it. We see the weak oppressed by the strong, and indignation rouses us to their rescue. We observe virtue victorious, and join in the triumph. The language of ideality, conveying to us what is the nearest approach to actual observation of the reality, produces in us more impulse, more emotion, than that of abstraction, in which we expect only a theoretical consequence, and that when reached, expressed in terms presenting no particular object to excite our pity, abhorrence or admiration. Our finite emotions are lost in the infinity of a general proposition, without a case for its immediate application. Hence too arises the distinction between the ef-



fects of the maxims of morality and devotional feeling, a distinction which though often denied by philosophers who have reasoned, has always been insisted upon by the multitude who feel and perceive.

Although the poetic and prosaic modes of mind are seldom found united in their highest perfection in the same individual, yet every aspect of the subject indicates, that it is by a combination of them, that the greatest intellectual power is produced. It is then the union of activity and strength—the beauty of poetry, mingling its vivacity and softness, with the sterner and stronger attributes of reason. So necessary does this combination appear to give efficiency to talent, that we think we should hazard little in asserting, that every great enterprise in philosophy had been accomplished by a powerful imagination, controlled and directed by yet more powerful reasoning faculties; and that every grand achievement in poetry, had been effected by strong reasoning powers, sustaining and impelling a yet more vigorous imagination. In great minds, it is not the absence of either endowment, but only the *predominance* of the reasoning or ideal faculty, which forms the distinction, and determines the character to the one or the other class.

The processes by which they accomplish their designs, and the pleasures resulting from their pur-

suits, may be more nearly alike than is generally supposed. Let us bring it to the test of language. A celebrated divine, thus speaks of one of the most ancient and most sublime of poets. "The Psalmist takes a loftier flight. He leaves the world and lifts his imagination to that mighty expanse which spreads above and around it. He wings his way through space, and wanders in thought over its immeasurable regions. Instead of a dark and unpeopled solitude, he sees it crowded with splendor, and filled with the energy of the divine presence. Creation rises in its immensity before him, and the world with all which it inherits shrinks into littleness, at a contemplation so vast and so overpowering. He wonders that he is not overlooked amid the grandeur and the variety which are on every side of him, and passing up from the majesty of nature, to the majesty of nature's architect, he exclaims what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldest deign to visit him." We have here a glowing description of the poet, his pursuits, and his feelings, but with Newton in our view, might we not apply the same to the philosopher in whom the powers of abstraction were most prominent. To preserve this distinction we might change the one word imaginations for investigations and say, "The man of abstraction takes a still loftier flight, he leaves the world and carries his *investigations* to that mighty expanse," &c. &c.

But let us examine a little more closely the mighty expanse which he opened to our view, and the means by which he accomplished it. Taking this earth for our pedestal, we first observe, that it is but one of a number of planets which, with their satellites, revolve round the sun as their common centre; and with the comets in their more eccentric orbits, compose the solar system. The nicety of their instruments, has enabled astronomers to detect a difference which has taken place in the angular distance of the fixed stars, from which reason has inferred that our whole system is revolving round some other centre which analogy suggests may be the common centre of many such systems, performing their cycles in times so inconceivably great, and at such immense distances that a thousand years scarcely makes a perceptible difference in their relative positions. The telescope has revealed to us a number of nebula, which it has been imagined are clusters of stars with systems like our own. It has also shown us that the galaxy is occasioned by the greater number of stars in that portion of the heavens, at great distances from us, and hence it has been inferred, that all these with the other visible, and probably many invisible stars, form one nebula, in which we occupy a position nearer to one edge of the cluster, and looking through the centre, see more stars in that direction, whose light, blended and softened in the distance, causes the milky appearance there exhibited.

And thus on this fact has reason raised an analogy in support of the conjecture. Imagination, as if despairing of any limit, next suggests that the number of these systems may be infinite, and reason has attempted to prove, that from the known laws of gravitation, it cannot be otherwise.

Thus supported she has ventured yet a farther flight, and not only conceived each of these stars a sun, with systems of planets revolving round it, and thus gemed with worlds this sublime immensity, but given to each the garniture of a resplendent canopy, animated them all with a teeming population, and clothed them with the verdure and variety which give beauty and interest to our own little orb. And here she has rested until these conjectures shall have been reduced to certainty, or rejected as errors or groundless hypotheses.

We learn that the diameter of the earth's orbit is nearly two hundred millions of miles, and we rack our inventions for some means of forming an adequate conception of this immense distance. We next find, and it is reduced to demonstration, that this distance is but an infinitesimal of the nearest fixed stars—that whether we are at one end of it or the other, makes not the least perceptible difference in their relative situation, and that in all probability there is a continuity of these stars, extending through a number of like distances before reaching the outer limits of our own cluster. Our feeble faculties are dismayed, and hardly attempt to grasp the reality of such grand and imposing calculations.

Yet what is all this immensity to the distance of the nearest nebula, from which to the aided eye of the observer, the congregated splendor of all this host of suns would appear but a feeble glimmering; and in the circumference of whose welkin vault the opposite extremes, embracing these millions upon millions, would appear but a span. We stand aghast at a contemplation so magnificent and so overpowering, and even the infinite tendencies of our nature seem to have found ample room for their dilation in the consideration of this merging of vast into yet vaster systems without end.

The perfection of optical instruments, enabled astronomers to possess themselves of the facts, on which rest the demonstrations of the truths and the probability of the conjectures which have raised their science to the highest elevation, and we know that some of those who have been instrumental in this grand achievement of philosophy, by long habit and continued effort, had learned to withdraw themselves from the ordinary distractions and engrossments of life, and had consequently acquired a power of concentrating their energies upon their favorite pursuit. They had then observation aided by the instruments of art, reason concentrated by abstraction from the usual cares of existence, wrought to its utmost effort by the inspiring magnitude of its pursuits, and bearing forward and sustaining a vigorous imagination excited to enthusiasm by the grandeur and sublimity of its objects. In a word,

that this most stupendous conception of the material universe, has been brought within the grasp of humanity, by a partial approach to that combination of the intellectual powers which we have supposed to become more perfect hereafter, and by a partial improvement of some of the elements of that combination by the action of the same causes which we have endeavored to show must there be more universal. And while we derive from this greatest, grandest achievement of mind, some idea of the effect of improving and uniting the faculties of observation, reason and imagination, we may also observe in the beautiful harmony with which these systems into systems run, as they diverge in the illimitable regions of space, a something which acts on our feelings like the ineffable power of melody, producing an emotion, may we not say an infinite yet tangible emotion of music, elevating us to the confines of devotion. And the whole development bears witness that this feeling had a great though perhaps an unperceived influence in directing those great strides of the imagination which preceded every great effort and advancement of reason.

It is in these sublime discoveries that mind has put forth all its power and exerted all its energies. It here appears in all its grandeur, and supported by all its dependencies. It is its last grand successful effort. We here see the utmost limit to which it has attained, and in this farthest stage of its advancement, we find it progressing towards



perfection in the path which our speculation has already traced, and which we have endeavored to extend in shadowy outline in the dim futurity.

In this process, ideality has performed its part, but the results have been reduced to the more definite form of abstraction. The great magnitude of these results, and the universal interest felt in them, has produced a corresponding effect on the age. Abstraction has acquired a supremacy, and is made the test of rationality on every subject. Ideality is not permitted to range far beyond its precincts. The noble sallies of the soul are repressed. Mind limited to a particular mode of action, exerts itself on subjects to which that mode is best adapted. Physical science is the order of the day. It has advanced, and is still advancing with astonishing rapidity. The great outlines which Newton and his cotemporaries struck out, is nearly filled up. The impulse which they gave to intellectual exertion is almost spent. The world is nearly ready for some other grand enterprise, and who that has observed the mutual light which the sciences shed upon each other, and their tendency to preserve an equilibrium, does not see in this accumulation of the knowledge of the laws of matter, an indication of a corresponding improvement in our knowledge of the laws of mind. Who that has observed the effect, which increasing our physical comforts has in producing a desire for the more refined pleas-

ures of intellect, does not in the present condition of the civilized world, already see the workings of an impulse which is to advance us in this higher pursuit. The laws of mind are confessedly not understood. Something has perhaps been done in training the reasoning faculty, but in regard to that other mode of mind to which we have applied the term ideality, we apprehend that very little has been accomplished. It appears to have been thought beyond the reach of any regulated discipline. Its processes have been regarded either as lawless workings of the spirit, or as subject only to the control of some higher intelligence. Thus unrestrained, its expansive nature has often dissipated itself in wild extravagances, or errors, requiring the aid of abstraction to correct. For want of proper restraints, it has sometimes been productive of evil, but we confidently look forward to a time when its laws and the means of directing its power will be better understood. When we shall know how to limit its expansibility within our means of controlling it, and as we become more and more acquainted with its nature, be able to use it in its most elastic form, and make it subservient to the most exalted purposes which are within the province of humanity. If we are not deceived, the time is not distant, when some strong hand will break down the barriers which now obstruct our progress in intellectual science, or some aspiring and gifted spirit rend the veil which obscures it,



and introduce us into new regions of light, illuminating mind, and displaying the true greatness of our nature.

## ERRATA.

- On page 9, 10 lines from bottom, for *charms* read *charm*.
- On page 17, 10 lines from bottom, for *speculations* read *speculation*.
- On page 22, last line, for *first* read *finest*.
- On page 23, middle, for *cause* read *case*.
- On page 42, 7 lines from bottom, for *thence* read *there*.
- On page 49, bottom line, for *forms* read *pours*.
- On page 50, bottom line, for *acquire* read *acquires*.
- On page 74, 4 lines from bottom, for *as* read *us*.
- On page 90, last line, for *intuition* read *intuitive*.
- On page 94, 10 lines from top, for *each* read *such*.
- On page 100, fourth line from bottom, for *verify* read *versify*.
- On page 129, 3 lines from bottom, for *led into* read *led us into*.











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